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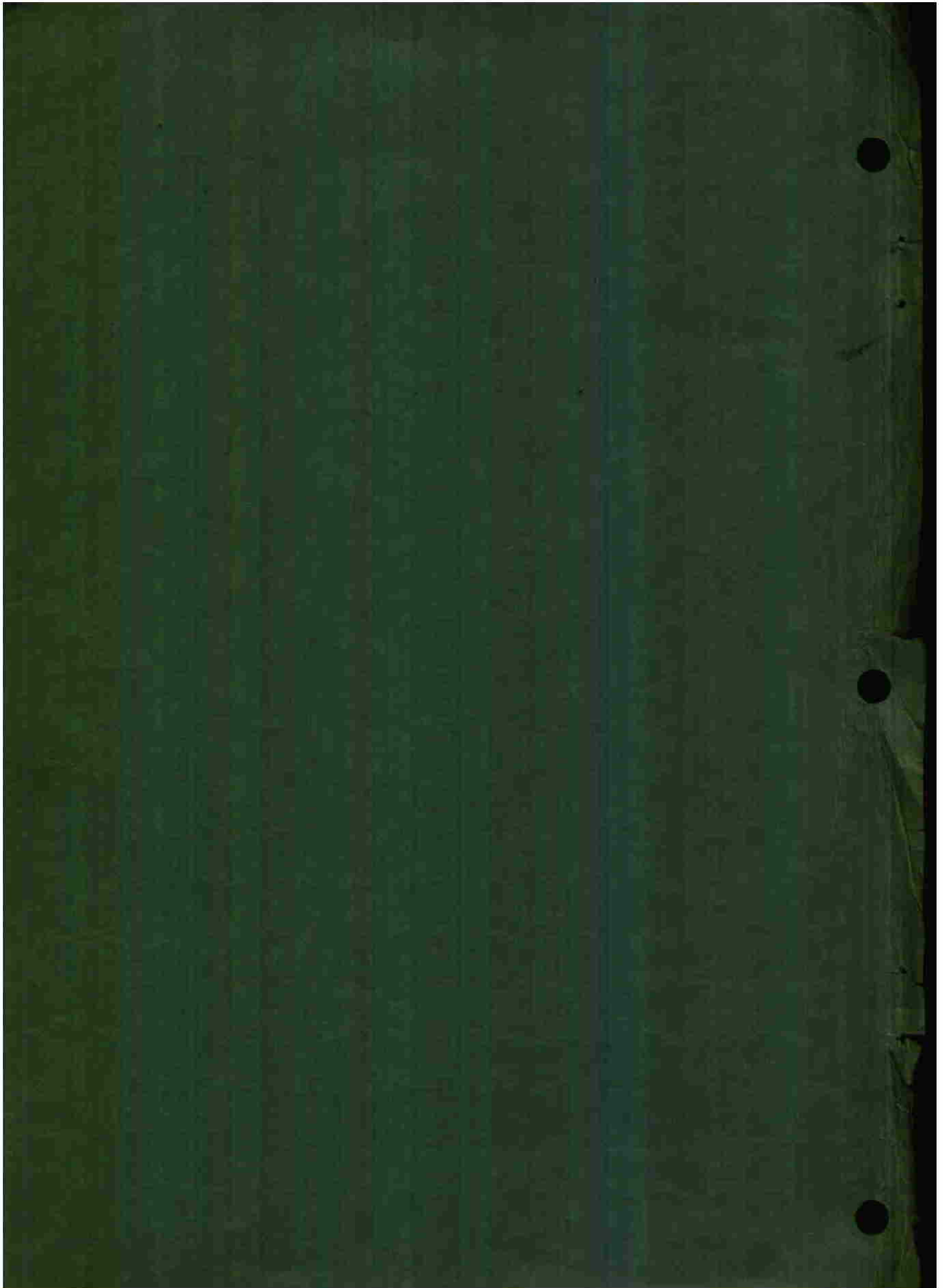
By
Generalleutnant Andreas Nielsen

USAF Historical Division
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Air University

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by

Generalleutnant Andreas Nielsen

USAF HISTORICAL DIVISION
RESEARCH STUDIES INSTITUTE
AIR UNIVERSITY
JUNE 1959

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FOREWORD

The German Air Force General Staff, by Generalleutnant a. D. Andreas Nielsen, is one of a series of historical studies written by former key officers of the German Air Force for the United States Air Force Historical Division.

The overall purpose of the series is threefold: 1) To provide the United States Air Force with a comprehensive and, insofar as possible, authoritative history of a major air force which suffered defeat in World War II; 2) to provide a history of that air force as prepared by many of its principal and responsible leaders; 3) to provide a firsthand account of that air force's unique combat in a major war with the forces of the Soviet Union. This series of studies therefore covers in large part virtually all phases of the Luftwaffe's operations and organization, from its camouflaged origin in the Reichswehr, during the period of secret German rearmament following World War I, through its participation in the Spanish Civil War and its massive operations and final defeat in World War II.

The German Air Force Historical Project, (referred to hereinafter by its shorter and current title, "The GAF Monograph Project") has generated this and other especially prepared volumes which comprise, in one form or another, a total of nearly fifty separate studies, some of them in multi-volume form. The project, patterned, in part, after an Army program already in existence, was, upon recommendation of Headquarters Air University late in 1952, approved and funded by Headquarters USAF in early 1953. General supervision was assigned to the USAF Historical Division by Headquarters USAF, which continued principal funding of the project through 30 June 1958. Within the USAF Historical Division Dr. Albert F. Simpson and Mr. Joseph W. Angell, Jr., respectively, Chief and Assistant Chief of the Division, exercised overall supervision of the project. The first steps towards its initiation were taken in the fall of 1952 following a staff visit by Mr. Angell to the Historical Division, Headquarters United States Army, Europe at Karlsruhe, Germany. There, the Army, as has been mentioned, was conducting a somewhat similar historical project covering matters and operations largely of primary interest to that service. Whereas

the Army's project had produced or was producing a multiplicity of studies of varying length and significance, (more than 2,000 have been prepared by the Army project thus far), it was early decided that the Air Force should request a radically smaller number (less than fifty) which should be very carefully planned initially and rather closely integrated. Thirteen narrative histories of GAF combat operations, by theater areas, and 27 monographic studies dealing with areas of particular interest to the United States Air Force were recommended to and approved by Headquarters USAF in the initial project proposal of late 1952. (A list of the histories and studies appears at the end of this volume.)

By early 1953 the actual work of preparing the studies was begun. Col. Wendell A. Hammer was assigned as Project Officer, with duty station at the USAREUR Historical Division in Karlsruhe. General der Flieger a. D. Paul Deichmann was appointed and served continuously as Control Officer for the German phase of the project; he also had duty station at the USAREUR Historical Division. General-leutnant a. D. Hermann Plocher served as Assistant Control Officer until his recall to duty with the new German Air Force in the spring of 1957. These two widely experienced and high-ranking officers of the former Luftwaffe secured as principal authors, or "topic leaders," former officers of the Luftwaffe, each of whom, by virtue of his experience in World War II, was especially qualified to write on one of the thirty-nine topics approved for study. These "topic leaders" were, in turn, assisted by "home workers"--for the most part former general and field-grade officers with either specialized operational or technical experience. The contributions of these "home workers," then, form the basic material of most of the studies. In writing his narrative, the "topic leader" has put these contributions into their proper perspective. The Control Officer and the Project Editor (Mr. Edwin P. Kennedy, Jr.) have, when necessary, indicated the relationship of the particular subject matter of each study to the other studies included in the project.

These studies find their principal authority in their authors' personal knowledge and experience. Thus, these studies are neither unbiased nor are they "histories" in the ordinary sense of that word. Instead, they constitute a vital part of the story without which the final history of Germany's role in World War II cannot be written.

In preparing these studies, however, the authors have not depended on their memories alone. Instead, they have supplemented their knowledge with a collection of Luftwaffe documents which has come to be known as the Karlsruhe Document Collection and which is now housed in the Archives Branch of the USAF Historical Division. This collection consists of directives, situation reports, war diaries, personal diaries, strength reports, minutes of meetings, aerial photographs, and various other materials derived, chiefly, from three sources: the Captured German Documents Section of The Adjutant General in Alexandria, Virginia; the Air Ministry in London; and private German collections donated to the project by its participating authors and contributors. In addition, the collection includes the contributions of the "home workers." Thus, the interested researcher can test the conclusions of the "topic leaders" against the basic documents or secure additional information on most of the subjects mentioned in the studies.

The authors have also made use of such materials as the records of the Nuremberg Trials, the manuscripts prepared by the Foreign Military Studies Branch of the USAREUR Historical Division, the official military histories of the United States and the United Kingdom, and the wealth of literature concerning World War II, both in German and English, which has appeared in book form or in military journals since 1945.

The complexity of the German Monograph Project and the variety of participation which it has required can easily be deduced from the acknowledgements which follow. On the German side: General der Flieger a.D. Paul Deichmann, who, as Chief Control Officer, became the moving force behind the entire project; General-leutnant Josef Kammhuber, who heads the new German Air Force, and who has consistently supported the project; Generaloberst a.D. Franz Halder, Chief of the German Army General Staff from 1938 to 1942, whose sympathetic assistance to the Project Officer, the Project Editor, and the German Control Group is greatly appreciated; Generalfeldmarschall a.D. Albert Kesselring, who contributed to several of the studies and who also, because of his prestige and popularity in German military circles, was able to encourage many others to contribute to the project; and all of the German "topic leaders" and "home workers"

who are too numerous to mention here, but whose names can be found in the prefaces and footnotes to the individual studies.

In Germany, Col. Wendell A. Hammer, USAF, served as Project Officer from early in 1953 until June 1957. Colonel Hammer's considerable diplomatic and administrative skills helped greatly towards assuring the project's success. Col. William S. Nye, USA, was Chief of the USAREUR Historical Division at the project's inception. His strong support provided an enviable example of inter-service cooperation and set the pattern which his several successors followed.

In England, Mr. L. A. Jackets, formerly Chief of Air Historical Branch No. 6 of the British Air Ministry and now Librarian, Air Ministry, gave invaluable assistance with captured Luftwaffe documents.

At the Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, a number of people, both military and civilian, have given strong and expert support to the project. Lt. Gen. Idwal H. Edwards, a former Commander of the Air University, initiated correspondence with Maj. Gen. Orlando Ward, USA, which resulted in a Department of the Army letter outlining the respective USAF-Army responsibilities for the project's execution. General Edwards' interest in the project and its goals was matched by the assistance given by his successors: General Laurence S. Kuter, Lt. Gen. Dean C. Strother and Lt. Gen. Walter E. Todd.

Other personnel at Headquarters Air University who have given freely of their time and experience include: Dr. James C. Shelburne, Educational Advisor to the Commander; Mr. J. S. Vann, Chief of Special Projects Branch, DCS/Operations; and Mr. Arthur F. Irwin, Chief, Budget Division, DCS/Comptroller.

Col. Garth C. Cobb, both as Director of the Research Studies Institute of the Air University, and, formerly, as Deputy Director of that organization, has helped to guide the project through a maze of administrative problems which, because of the project's unprecedented nature, have beset it from the beginning. Colonel Cobb's assistance,

and that of his predecessors Col. Curtis D. Sluman, Brig. Gen. Clinton W. Davies and Col. Wilfred J. Paul, was invaluable to the project.

The project is grateful to Col. Fred W. Miller, USAF Air Attache to Germany, and the Assistant Air Attache, Lt. Col. Leonard C. Hoffmann, both of whom gave indispensable aid during the project's last year in Germany. Also in Germany, Mr. Joseph P. Tustin, the Historian of Headquarters, United States Air Forces in Europe, has ably assisted the project by solving a variety of logistical and administrative problems. This study was translated by Mrs. Patricia Klammerth, whose skillful contribution to the project is greatly appreciated.

Miss Sara Venable, responsible for the final typing, deserves special thanks for her extraordinary patience and competence. Finally, the project is indebted to all of the members of the USAREUR Historical Division, the Office of the Chief of Military History, and the USAF Historical Division who, through direct assistance and advice, helped the project to achieve its goals.

Dr. Albert F. Simpson, Chief, USAF Historical Division, and Mr. Edwin P. Kennedy, Jr., the Project Editor, collaborated in the final editing of this study. To assure the technical accuracy of the translation, Mr. Kennedy compared the entire text with the original German manuscript. The stylistic peculiarities of the author, when they did not lend themselves to idiomatic English, were left in literal translation.

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PREFACE

The Luftwaffe General Staff grew out of the German Army General Staff, which was the direct descendant of the Great General Staff and heir to almost two hundred years of General Staff tradition. Perhaps because of its newness or because of its stepchild relationship to the Army General Staff, little has been written about the Luftwaffe General Staff. Recent books on the German General Staff concern themselves, almost wholly, with the Army General Staff. One of the goals of this study, therefore, is to provide information which has, until now, been missing and which is essential to an understanding of Germany's role in World War II.

Another goal is to throw light on the relationships which existed between the Luftwaffe General Staff, the Army General Staff, the Admiral Staff, the Armed Forces General Staff, and the National Socialist Party. Some of the problems attendant to these relationships are common to most military establishments and are, and will continue to be, timely and significant.

Although the Luftwaffe General Staff was frequently handicapped by the struggles between the General Staff Chiefs, State Secretary Milch, and Goering, it was, nevertheless, an elite corps with very high standards. Furthermore, during the course of the War it proved to be a remarkable organizational device for shortening the lines of command and making operational control rapid and efficient.

Titles of supporting documents cited in the footnotes to this study are given in both German and English, followed, when applicable, by a file folder designation to enable the interested reader to locate the supporting documents and related materials in the Karlsruhe Document Collection.

Since no standard translations exist for most Luftwaffe administrative titles, office designations and other specialized Luftwaffe terms, a detailed glossary, giving the translations used in this text and the original German terms, is appended to this study. Following the general practice, German military ranks above colonel have not been translated. At the end of this study is a table giving equivalent German

and American general officer ranks.

Changes in the author's style and choice of words have been held to a minimum. The author's opinion has been respected and preserved by both translator and editor; it is in no way to be construed as representing the views of the United States Air Force.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Generalleutnant Andreas Nielsen, a former General Staff officer, was well qualified to write the present study. He was born in December 1899, and died, while working for the German Monograph Project, in April 1957. Until 1933, during the period of secret rearmament, he served as an officer in the Reichswehr. In 1933, already recognized by his superiors as a promising young officer, he was selected to attend the Army War Academy. After leaving the Academy, in 1935, he transferred into the Luftwaffe and a key position as General Staff officer in the Luftwaffe Personnel Office. He continued in the Personnel Office until 1939, serving the last two years there as Chief of the Policy Section.

In 1939, General Nielsen saw active duty in Spain and Poland. In 1940, during the French campaign, he served as Chief of the General Staff of II Air Corps. From 1940 through 1943 he was Chief of the General Staff of Fifth Air Fleet and in 1944 he became Chief of the General Staff of Air Fleet Reich, in which position he served until the capitulation.

INTRODUCTION

During the first half of this century, the German Armed Forces have lost two world wars. Despite this record, they have not lost very much of their prestige, either in Germany or abroad. This rather surprising fact can be attributed chiefly to two factors: (1) the widely-recognized reputation of the German soldier as a competent fighter, and (2) the quality of leadership exercised during all the wars in which the Prussian and German Armed Forces participated in the preceding century as well as in the present one.

And this leadership--correctly or incorrectly--is inextricably identified with the German General Staff. Although the German General Staff lost some of its significance as an effective instrument of military leadership after 1918 and--after a brief period of resurgence during the last war--lost all of its influence, it still figures in the mind of the layman as the ruling power behind Germany's past military exploits. For this reason, it is often selected as a whipping-boy by factions eager to fix the blame for the mistakes made by political leadership. Even today, the majority of laymen give willing recognition to the historic contributions of the German General Staff, although it cannot be denied that the continual arguments about it have led to a serious decline in its popularity. The facts that its continued existence was forbidden after World War I, and that it was disbanded entirely after World War II have undoubtedly done much to maintain the nimbus which clings to it.

Inasmuch as the Luftwaffe General Staff, as the legitimate offspring of the Army General Staff, was also affected by these events, it seems expedient here to summarize briefly the historical development of the German General Staff. The background thus provided is indispensable to our full understanding of the role played by the Luftwaffe General Staff in World War II.

I should like to point out right at the beginning that there is little chance of our reconstructing a historically accurate picture of the most recent developments. A great many documents have been

destroyed, either during the war or--deliberately--after the war was over. Thus, in reconstructing the history of the Luftwaffe General Staff, the author was forced to resort to the aid of several individuals and to draw on his own memory of events.* Inevitably, there are dates, numbers, and facts which, in the absence of any means of verification, differ considerably in the memory of the persons consulted. It is also unrealistic to expect that events and their significance should not have been colored somewhat by the awareness of defeat and by the difficult postwar years following it, and many participants have no doubt evaluated certain events otherwise than would have been the case at the time of their occurrence.

In the present study, I have attempted to weld together the mosaic bits of information available from the various sources into as comprehensive a picture as possible of the Luftwaffe General Staff; its development, the criteria followed in the selection of its personnel, its organizational structure and the missions assigned to it, and its relationship to other agencies of military command, to the State, and to the National Socialist (Nazi) Party. I have also attempted to point out the lessons which may be learned by posterity from our experience in this connection. If this study contains material which is contradictory to that appearing in other publications, the reason for such discrepancies is the one which I have cited above. Complete clarity and historical accuracy will be attainable only at such time as all the documentary material extant becomes available for reference.

Before the reader begins his perusal of the material to follow, I should like to acquaint him with a basic directive issued by Hitler, which had a decidedly negative effect on the status and operation of the German General Staff in comparison with the situation obtaining prior to its issuance. This directive was the so-called "Basic Fuehrer

* The author was intimately concerned with the formation of the Luftwaffe General Staff in his capacity as an advisory expert on General Staff officers.

Directive,"* issued by Hitler on 15 January 1940. Because of its importance, I feel it should be summarized here, at the beginning of the study.

Basic Directive

1. No agency or officer will receive any information pertaining to a classified project unless it is absolutely necessary, for reasons of duty, that they obtain such information.
2. No agency or officer will receive more detailed information regarding a classified project than is strictly necessary to permit them to carry out their assigned missions in connection with it.
3. No agency or officer will receive any information pertaining to a classified project prior to the last possible moment consistent with effective performance of their work on that project.
4. This directive expressly forbids the automatic forwarding of orders whose secrecy is of prime importance in accordance with established distribution lists.

/s/ Adolf Hitler

As desirable a security measure as this directive seems at first glance, it put an effective stop to any independent work on the part of the General Staff as an entity. The directive demoted the

* Based on a report by Dr. Rudolf Baumgardt, Wuerzburg. Editor's Note: A similar English translation of this directive is included in Fuehrer Directives and Other Top-Level Directives of the German Armed Forces, 1939-1941; translated and compiled by the Division of Naval Intelligence, Washington, D. C., 1948. Aside from a slight discrepancy in dates--the Navy translation gives the date as 11 January 1940--the wording of the Navy translation is the same as the German text cited by the author of this study.

individual branches of the General Staff as well as the general staffs of troop units to mere recipients of orders, expected to carry out the tasks assigned to them without being able to evaluate and act in accordance with the over-all plan. This directive must serve as a basis for any evaluation of the development and operations of the General Staff of the Luftwaffe, and of the degree of influence it might be expected to have had on the conduct of the War.

Chapter 1

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GERMAN GENERAL STAFF¹

In the era of "cabinet warfare" military commanders personally led their forces--usually consisting of a relatively small number of mercenary troops--into battle and directed their movements from the vantage point of a "general's hill." No special operations staff was needed to assure effective guidance of the troops. Orders were usually carried directly to the unit commander concerned by mounted orderlies. This method of directing military operations was common and feasible as late as during the lifetime of Frederick the Great (1740-1786).

Not until the end of the eighteenth century did the new methods ushered in by the French Revolution effect a fundamental change. At this point the mercenary army was replaced by the conscripted, national army, and the traditional closed battle order by a more flexible formation in the field. Napoleon, as Field Marshal of the Revolution and later Emperor of the French, became the revered master of modern strategy for all the European nations of his day. For this military genius was the first to succeed in conducting simultaneous operations in several theaters of war and in moving his armies so skillfully as to enable them to strike in unison. It is obvious that this new method of conducting operations could not be carried out by a single individual. The commander needed helpers to carry out the computations necessary for such extended operations, to relieve him of petty details and preparations, and to issue orders in accordance with his instructions.

During the course of the reorganization of the Prussian Army, after its defeat in the war of 1806-07, every effort was made to take this fact into account. As early as 1796 a so-called Quartermaster General's Staff had been established. Its function, however, was primarily the handling of administrative matters, and it had little or no influence on the commitment of the Army. Then, in 1802, Colonel Christian von Massenbach, apparently motivated by his study of

Napoleonic strategy, prepared a memorandum for the King, in which he proposed a reorganization of the Quartermaster General's Staff. The King, in his reply, used the term General Staff. A Cabinet decree of 26 November 1803 gave official approval for von Massenbach's suggested reorganization, with minor modifications, to become effective on 1 January 1804.

One of the new features of the contemplated reorganization was the introduction of examinations for candidates for General Staff posts. These examinations covered geometry, trigonometry, the designing of fortifications, strategy, and military history. In addition, candidates were expected to present proof of blameless personal conduct, reliability, and thorough familiarity with service at the front. These criteria, modified to suit the conditions of the time, were approximately the same as those which General Staff candidates were later required to meet. The first examination took place on 15 February 1804; participation was optional.

The terms Quartermaster General's Staff and General Staff were used interchangeably for the newly organized staff. The three colonels holding posts on the Quartermaster General's Staff were Karl Ludwig August von Phull, von Massenbach, and Gerhard Johann Scharnhorst. Scharnhorst, in particular, devoted a great deal of attention to the training of his officers in military strategy and history. General von Geusau, the elderly Chief of the General Staff, took very little personal interest in this activity. In Carl von Clausewitz' opinion, von Geusau's effectiveness as Chief of the General Staff was conspicuous by its absence. Under these circumstances, he could hardly be expected to have any influence on the events of 1806-07.

The Prussian General Staff, in the form in which it was best known, developed gradually out of the military preparations and requirements of the wars of liberation (1813-15). The men who guided its growth were in part the same ones who later, in 1813, were to make good the tragedies of Jena and Auerstedt. Some of them, e. g. Scharnhorst, Count Neithardt von Gneisenau, and Clausewitz, had already voiced their conviction that military events might have been

different in 1806-07 if their views had been listened to in time.

Historians have not yet reached a unanimous decision in naming a single individual as the creator of the Prussian General Staff. Scharnhorst is selected most frequently for this honor. However, Field Marshal Alfred Count von Schlieffen, one of the greatest General Staff chiefs in Prussian history, maintains that Gneisenau, and not Scharnhorst, was the creator of the General Staff--and this in spite of the many mistakes which Gneisenau admittedly made. Helmuth Carl von Moltke's opinion is also interesting, reflecting his respect for Gneisenau in the words "His contribution was greater than mine--he led an army from defeat to victory" (Ligny - Waterloo). It is not our place to decide between the two--in any case, it would seem to be largely a matter of perspective. There can be no doubt of the fact that Scharnhorst, as Director of the War Academy, had a profound influence on the formation and intellectual development of the General Staff. Among his students at the Academy were such young men as Clausewitz, Tiedemann, August Rühle von Lilienstern, and Hermann von Boyen, all of them destined to loom large in Prussian military history and to have considerable influence on the further development of the General Staff. In this way, Scharnhorst's role did not end with his death (from wounds sustained in battle)--he continued to live through his disciples. Nearly all the great leaders of the wars of liberation had come from his school; they developed his ideas and thus helped to keep them alive in the Army.

Gneisenau, too, was one of Scharnhorst's disciples. His greatest contribution to the development of the General Staff was probably in the field of the practical training of the General Staff officers. He taught them mental discipline, the difficult art of distinguishing the important from the trivial. His goal was the creation of an officer capable of keeping his mind free for the essential problem. He warned the higher-level General Staff officers repeatedly against permitting themselves to become bureaucrats. He envisioned service on the General Staff as an opportunity to put to use the disciplined thinking of a trained mind, supplemented by military experience, and fortified by a feeling of closeness to the line troops. Gneisenau's organization of the general staff of the Silesian Army,

while serving as Field Marshal Gebhard Leberecht von Bluecher's chief of staff, proved to be so excellent, as evidenced by the impressive number of victories won by von Bluecher's forces during the Wars of Liberation, that it was soon adopted as a pattern by all the other staffs within the Prussian Army.

In addition to these two--Scharnhorst and Gneisenau--there is another man without whom the later development of the Prussian General Staff would have been unthinkable. Coming from the Scharnhorst-Gneisenau circle, this man was to have a profound influence on the intellectual concepts associated with the General Staff; he was General Carl von Clausewitz. Clausewitz shared the fate of a great many leading military historians--he never had the opportunity to apply his tremendous knowledge to a practical situation in a position of importance. His role in the later triumphs of the Prussian Army, as a teacher and mentor of the officer corps of his own day and--through his writings--as a guiding spirit for subsequent generations of General Staff officers, was, therefore, all the greater. We should point out here that his fame as intellectual father of many generations of well-known soldiers and of the Prussian General Staff was due less to his activity as Director of the War Academy* than to his book Vom Kriege (On War),² written in the quiet solitude of his study. Later generations of military leaders from all over the world have drawn on the store of military wisdom he left behind, and I do not feel that I exaggerate in stating that the thoughts contained in his book have had a formative influence on the mental outlook of the German General Staff officer.

In the periods following, the history of the Prussian General Staff is highly colored by the personality of its chiefs. General Carl Wilhelm von Grolmann, who succeeded in putting to practical use the lessons learned during the wars of liberation, deserves first mention here. In 1817, von Grolmann managed to obtain approval for the conversion of Department II of the War Ministry, to which the Cabinet decree of 28 August 1814 had assigned the General Staff, to an independent operations staff--the Army General Staff.

* From 1818 until 1829.

The newly designated staff was divided into the following branches:

- Eastern theater of war
- Central theater of war
- Western theater of war
- Military history branch (including archive and library)
- Topographical Branch*
- Operational Planning Branch
- Lithographic Institute

Even during the period of his service as Chief of the General Staff, von Grolmann was a man who carried out his tireless activities behind the scenes, so that only the initiated were aware of the dynamic force of his personality. His good friend, General von Boyen, Minister of War, called him an "ancient Roman." Indeed, his strong and inflexible personality, which refused to bow even before the authority of the King, seemed to incorporate the austerity inherent in the Prussian way of life.

In 1819, when von Boyen was relieved as Minister of War, von Grolmann, fearing that the former's successor might wish to make changes detrimental to the work to which he had devoted so much thought and energy, resigned as Chief of the General Staff. His successor was General Ruehle von Lilienstern, a sensitive man of artistic propensities who had demonstrated his ability in several fields. His tenancy of the post of Chief of the General Staff, however, left no enduring traces on its development.

He was relieved of his post after only one year in office. In his successor, General Friedrich Karl von Mueffling, the General Staff gained a strong personality as Chief, a man who finally was able to free his position from its dependence on the Minister of War. He was instructed, to be sure, that he was to "remain in close contact with the Minister of War and to make certain that the latter concurred

* Branch devoted to the preparation of military maps.

before issuing important orders or bringing forward significant proposals." Thus, the Chief of the General Staff had still not become directly subordinate to his monarch. Field Marshal Moltke later praised von Mueffling's contribution to the training and organization of the General Staff when he said that anyone who had had the good fortune to know von Mueffling personally was bound to feel the greatest respect for him.

Von Mueffling's successor was General Johann Wilhelm von Krauseneck, who was appointed Chief of the General Staff on 28 November 1829. Krauseneck did his best to make the training of the General Staff officers as practical as possible by expanding the General Staff journeys (Generalstabsreise)* and increasing the number of large-scale military exercises, which were always accompanied by the study of some phase of military history. In addition to numerous memoranda, it was his habit to prepare an annual mobilization plan for the King. Some of his students during the long years of his service as Chief of the General Staff were Hugo Ewald Count von Kirchbach, August Karl von Goeben, Hindersin, Eduard Friedrich von Fransecky, Albrecht Theodore Count von Roon, and Moltke, all of whom made names for themselves in the Prussian Army.

In 1848, General Friedrich Wilhelm von Reyher succeeded Krauseneck, then an old man with many years of service behind him. Von Reyher's Army career had been meteor-like; a brilliant soldier, he began as an enlisted man and advanced to the rank of general and to the highest post in the Army. The courage which he demonstrated during the Wars of Liberation combined with an unusual degree of military ability to make him "a man without character faults," as his contemporaries called him.

As Chief of the General Staff, von Reyher's first concern was to establish an ordered scope for the missions assigned to that body.

* Editor's Note: The Generalstabsreise was an annual journey undertaken by the Chief of the Great General Staff with his staff officers for the purpose of studying tactical and strategic problems.

He opposed adamantly the contemplated combination of the General Staff with the Adjutant's Office into a single Army Staff, as well as the proposal to do away with the distinctive special uniform worn by members of the General Staff. He felt that the uniform should be retained as an external symbol of the inner awareness of a common goal and a common concept of honor and duty. He devoted his special attention to the training of young candidates for General Staff posts. The General Staff journeys carried out under his guidance never failed to be extremely valuable for the participants. In addition to the staff journeys, von Reyher also undertook personal inspection trips, during which the railway played a role for the first time in the movement of military forces and in the planning of military operations.

Von Reyher's planning was characterized by unusual clarity. His evaluation of the political scene was remarkably accurate, and some of his thoughts on military operations exhibited his genius. His special contribution was the development of a group of outstanding officers, who were to prove their ability during the wars of unification. His most far-reaching decision, however, was to recommend as his successor a relatively unknown officer--General Helmuth Carl Bernhard von Moltke, (the elder).

With Moltke's appointment in 1858, the General Staff gained a highly-trained officer and a man of personal distinction, who was destined to mould the German General Staff, during the thirty years of war and peace in which he served as its Chief, into the instrument of perfection which it was at the peak of its fame. Moltke's position was very difficult at first, because he was subordinate to the Minister of War in many respects. There is little point in our going into detail here regarding the various steps leading to success; suffice it to say that Moltke finally persuaded the King of the validity of his point of view, and the latter issued instructions to the effect that all of his operational orders to troop staffs were to be issued through the Chief of the Army General Staff, with information copies going to the Ministry of War at the same time. From this moment on, the Minister of War was relegated to the background by the Chief of the General Staff, particularly in time of war. During the Franco-Prussian campaign of 1870-71, Moltke even came forward with the startling view

that the Minister of War did not belong at staff headquarters, but in his Ministry in Berlin. General von Roon, as Minister of War, did take part in the Franco-Prussian War, but the part of a spectator rather than a leader.* The relationship between the Chief of the General Staff and the Minister of War has been subject to many changes since that time, most of them traceable to the personalities and degree of personal initiative possessed by the incumbents of the two positions. Until 1918, the guiding principles for their relationship were those detailed in the Cabinet decree of 24 May 1883. This decree established direct access to the monarch as a right of the Chief of the General Staff and thus made his position, for all practical purposes, equal to that of the Minister of War.

Through his tireless activity, Moltke succeeded in developing a staff of assistants who, with rare exceptions, proved themselves worthy of the authority vested in them during time of war and peace. Moltke wanted most of all to assure absolute consistency in strategic and tactical thinking, so that he could rely upon his instructions and orders being carried out effectively at all staff levels.

Moltke was not only a military genius; he was also adept at that adroit coordination of military and political factors which is an indispensable attribute of the true commander. Whenever his views were contrary to those of Bismarck, he was willing to allow the considerations of foreign policy to come first--an additional indication of the reserve and inflexible self-control which were typical of him and which have since come to be identified with the prototype of the General Staff officer.

Moltke was continually and tirelessly concerned for the political and military security of his nation. Entirely free of the onesidedness which so often results in blind prejudice, a man of few words, an author of the classical school, a deeply religious person--as befits the sense of responsibility he felt as a leader of men--a conqueror who never lost a battle, in short, Moltke was one of the greatest

* Translator's Note: This is a play on words in the German text, "nicht leitend sondern leidend," literally, not leading but suffering.

of Germany's sons. None of the attempts to write his biography has yet resulted in a monument worthy of his genius.

Moltke has become the ideal--unattained as yet--for all subsequent Chiefs of the General Staff. All of them, to a greater or lesser degree, have been carried by his fame. His day marked the peak of influence of the German General Staff; it should be remembered, however, that history has never again provided an environmental situation akin to the one in which Moltke carried out his work. It is quite possible that political leadership of the quality provided by Wilhelm I and Bismarck would have helped even a less brilliant soldier than Moltke to fame, while even the most gifted commander is doomed to failure if his political leaders are incompetent.

In 1888 Moltke brought the brilliant officer Alfred Count von Waldersee into his own immediate circle of assistants as Quartermaster General, in order to groom him as his successor. Count von Waldersee's contemporaries describe him as an extremely ambitious man. His removal from office after only two and one-half years of service as Chief of the General Staff was due to political reasons. Even so, during his period of service he succeeded--by dint of numerous well-prepared memoranda--in modernizing the training and organizational structure of the General Staff and in establishing a policy of replacing the often elderly incumbents of important staff posts--many of them were inclined to rest on the laurels gathered in past wars--by younger men.

On 7 February 1891 Waldersee was succeeded by General Alfred Count von Schlieffen, a highly gifted officer who was to hold the post of Chief of the General Staff for fifteen years and to make his influence deeply felt both in the Army and among the general public. His significance for the General Staff is exceeded only by that of Field Marshal Moltke. One can appreciate the scope of Schlieffen's work on the General Staff only if one recalls to mind the peculiar position of Germany, the location of her borders, and her potential enemies in a possible war--for the threat of war was becoming more and more imminent. Schlieffen was fully aware of the fact that political developments were leading inexorably to a two-front war, and he attempted--

in numerous studies dealing with the problem--to find a way of averting the catastrophe. Finally, however, he came to realize that events would have to take their course, and from this moment on, he devoted all his energy to devising a plan for mastering the situation when war did come. He recognized that a rapid and conclusive victory would be possible only if he could encircle the French front via Belgium, and his plan (called the Schlieffen Plan, after its author) called for a relatively strong concentration of forces in the West, balanced by minimum coverage of the eastern front.* His successor adopted the basic tenets of his plan in 1914. Its failure on that occasion was due chiefly to the ineptitude of the Chief of the General Staff, who modified it so drastically that he managed to let a sure victory slip through his fingers.

Schlieffen's contributions to the training and organization of the General Staff are unforgettable. He continued to follow the guidelines laid down by Moltke and worked consistently to attain uniformity of training and of strategic thinking as a recognized basis for the successful functioning of a command apparatus which had become fairly extensive, in keeping with the increasing size of the Army. It was chiefly due to the groundwork accomplished by Schlieffen that the German General Staff was able to carry out full-scale mobilization so smoothly in 1914. It was Schlieffen's tragedy that he was unable to carry his work to its logical end, i. e., to put his thinking into actual practice, although he clearly foresaw the coming catastrophe.

The veneration in which the Army held this great Chief of the General Staff found suitable expression after World War I in the establishment of the Schlieffen Society, an association composed of General Staff officers from both the old Army and the Reichswehr† who wished to do honor to his memory and to carry on his work.

* Editor's Note: There is considerable controversy concerning the Schlieffen Plan. For a recent and opposing view, see The Schlieffen Plan by Gerhard Ritter, Frederick A. Praeger, New York, 1958; particularly the foreword by B. H. Liddell Hart.

† The German National Defense Establishment under the Versailles Treaty.

In 1906 Schlieffen was replaced by General Helmuth Johannes Ludwig von Moltke, a nephew of the greatest of the Prussian General Staff Chiefs. It seems certain that his uncle's name was not without influence on von Moltke's selection, for he was the first to admit that he did not feel himself qualified for such a responsible assignment. However, despite his objections, the Emperor had insisted upon his appointment.

As early as 1908 von Moltke went to work to modify the brilliant Plan devised by Schlieffen--motivated partly by political consideration for Bavaria--and thus completed the groundwork for Germany's defeat in 1914-18. A stronger, more positive personality would no doubt have refused to let himself be swayed by political considerations of this sort.

The problematic position of the German General Staff may be said to have its roots in the fact that it was headed by such a weak personality at the very time it was faced with the patently unavoidable catastrophe represented by World War I. It would be unfair to make the Chief of the General Staff responsible for Germany's defeat; his intentions were certainly of the best. However, the weaker the man at the top is, the greater is the danger that secondary considerations, which would otherwise be brushed aside as irrelevant, will begin to exert their claims, and that subordinate agencies will attempt to win power and influence. The reputation of the General Staff had created an aura of infallibility and authority around the individuals belonging to it, so that it was quite within the realm of possibility to entrust a lieutenant colonel from the General Staff with the decision of whether or not entire armies should break off a battle in which they were engaged.* This example, from the Marne Battle of 1914, illustrates clearly that a development had taken place which was no longer consistent with the tradition of the General Staff. In the last analysis, however, the failure of Germany's opening thrust in 1914--and possibly the loss of the war itself--was due to a lack of direction on

* As evidenced by the dispatching of Lieutenant Colonel Hentsch to the German First Army.

the part of military leadership, personified by the Chief of the General Staff. No one can absolve him of blame in this respect, for he was the one who bore the responsibility.

When World War I began, the Great General Staff* was replaced by the General Staff of the Field Forces, while a Deputy Army General Staff remained on duty in Berlin.

In 1916, when Paul von Hindenburg became Chief of the General Staff of the Field Forces, the position of the Quartermaster General (filled by Erich Ludendorff) was made equal to his own in point of responsibility. This, of course, was an innovation. Inasmuch as Hindenburg very soon took over the task of directing the operations of all the forces of Germany and her allies, the terms Chief of the General Staff for Hindenburg and Quartermaster General for Ludendorff are somewhat confusing. Even though the Emperor was nominally the Supreme Commander, uniting the requirements of both political and military leadership in his person, Hindenburg gradually expanded his position to the point where, for all practical purposes, he alone was responsible for directing operations and Ludendorff was his chief of staff. It was Ludendorff who so increased the authority of the general staff chiefs in the line units that the commanders themselves were no longer capable of making a decision on their own. This went so far that the Field Forces were being controlled exclusively through General Staff channels. It was inevitable that this method of command should lead to a growing conceit on the part of many General Staff officers, and it was bound to have undesirable consequences. In order to prevent the development of a similar situation, the responsibilities of the commanders and their chiefs of staff were clearly delineated prior to World War II.

The developments taking their start after Germany's defeat in World War I stood under the shadow of the Allies' demands that the

* The term usually applied to the central General Staff in Berlin to distinguish it from the Troop General Staffs within line units.

Great General Staff be disbanded entirely. The tiny National Army authorized by the Versailles Treaty was placed under the command of General Hans von Seeckt, a General Staff officer of versatile ability and recognized reputation. He made no attempt to reconstruct the Great General Staff in its old, traditional form. The Allies' categorical refusal to approve the continuance of the German General Staff was based on the erroneous conviction, then prevalent abroad, that the General Staff had exerted an unsuitable and unhealthy influence on the policies of the German government and had forced it into World War I. This assumption grew out of a total misunderstanding of the status and functions of the General Staff and an overestimation of the personality of its Chief, the younger Moltke. History has refuted this view completely, as well as the fallacy, long subscribed to by the Allies, that Germany alone was responsible for the outbreak of World War I.

Of necessity General von Seeckt was limited to assigning those tasks normally the province of a general staff to one of the branches of the Army Directorate. This branch, the Troop Office, was staffed by former General Staff personnel, who continued to wear the distinctive General Staff uniform. Logically enough, the Troop Office soon developed into a kind of anonymous general staff, whose activities, however, deviated considerably from those of the former General Staff because of the restrictions of the Versailles Treaty, the altered chain of command, and the many troop-associated duties made necessary by the establishment and training of the National Army.

In addition to this pseudo general staff, a number of posts were created within the troop units, to be filled later by assistant chiefs of staff, (Fuehrergehilfen).*

In order to create a reserve upon which to draw in the filling of vacant posts in the Ministry and with the troop units, particularly

* Editor's Note: The term Fuehrergehilfen was a cover name for General Staff Officers assigned as aides to higher officers in the troop units.

well-qualified officers were selected by means of annual, mandatory examinations, withdrawn from their units, and trained in special three-year courses. In this way, a body of officer elite gradually came into being again and was informally known as a general staff. It lay in the nature of their situation that the chiefs of the Troop Office should feel themselves to be pseudo chiefs of the general staff. And it is true that only the best-qualified officers were considered in filling this important post, namely those officers who seemed most capable of carrying on the old tradition of the General Staff.

It was not until 1935, when Germany regained her military sovereignty, that the Troop Office was officially redesignated the Army General Staff in the old tradition. General der Artillerie Ludwig von Beck (later Generaloberst), Chief of the Troop Office, was retained as the first Chief of the Army General Staff.

I do not think it necessary here to go into detail regarding the organization and functions of the newly formed staff--they were substantially the same as they had been in the past. There was one extremely important difference, however, between the new staff and the Great General Staff of prewar days. Whereas the Chief of the Great General Staff was directly subordinate to the Emperor and officially responsible only to him (i. e. he had the status of an high-level government agency), the Chief of the Army General Staff was now subordinate to the Commander in Chief of the Army and served as the latter's chief assistant and advisor. The right to present his views in person before the head of State, a privilege of the former Chief of the General Staff, could now be exercised only through channels, i. e. through the Commander in Chief of the Army and, as final reviewing authority, through the Reichs Minister of War in his capacity as Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. When Hitler united these two offices,* the channel was, of course, simplified, but by that time the growing distrust in the National Socialistic reliability of the General Staff was

* After Field Marshal Werner von Blomberg was relieved of his post as Minister of War and Generaloberst Walther von Brauchitsch resigned as Commander in Chief of the Army (1941).

great enough to discourage the close coordination which would have been so desirable from the point of view of military effectiveness.

In any case, the Army General Staff could no longer lay claim to an exclusive significance such as that enjoyed by the Great General Staff, for in addition to the Army, the Luftwaffe was coming into being as an independent branch of the Armed Forces and had an undeniable right to claim the same level of leadership. In order to coordinate the administration of the three branches (Army, Navy, and Luftwaffe), Hitler created the Armed Forces High Command out of the Armed Forces Office of the Reichs Minister of War, after he had taken over the latter post himself. Within the Armed Forces High Command, that agency best qualified by its authority and organization to assume the responsibilities of the Great General Staff was the Armed Forces Operations Staff. There were men of vision in all three branches of the Armed Forces, particularly in the Luftwaffe, who saw the value of this development and supported it wholeheartedly. However, apart from the fact that there was an acute shortage of qualified officers to carry out the training courses in the Armed Forces War Academy, which had been set up on an experimental basis, the lack of interest on the part of the Army General Staff precluded any actions being taken to develop an Armed Forces General Staff of this type. Moreover, there is reason to doubt that a man so personally conceited as Hitler was would have permitted for long the existence of a position so strong as that of Chief of an Armed Forces General Staff. As a result, the Armed Forces Operations Staff of the Armed Forces High Command remained a small personal staff for the exclusive use of the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, in short--of Hitler himself. Inasmuch as the Commanders in Chief of the individual service branches had the right to bring their problems directly to the Fuehrer, and utilized their own general staffs for routine work, it is clear that the Armed Forces High Command had very little influence. Under these circumstances, coordinated planning, development, and operations within the Armed Forces grew more and more difficult as more and more decisions were being made by a single man--the more so as this man had tragically little experience in military affairs.

Under the circumstances, it would have obviously been more

to the purpose to reinstate the old Great General Staff in the form of an Armed Forces General Staff in order to guarantee a modicum of consistency in matters of defense and in the conduct of operations. In that case the general staffs of the three individual service branches of the Armed Forces would have had executive rather than planning functions.

Inasmuch as this shift of responsibilities was not feasible, it was perfectly obvious that the Luftwaffe, as a recognized branch of the Armed Forces, had every right to demand a command apparatus just as well-trained and just as effective as the ones already present in the Army and the Navy.

The following chapter will describe in greater detail the underlying reasons motivating the formation of a special Luftwaffe General Staff.

Chapter 2

THE ORIGINS OF THE LUFTWAFFE GENERAL STAFF

In any military force it is usual for the great soldiers of the past to serve as models and mentors for subsequent generations. This is particularly true of the German Army General Staff, which had every right to be proud of the accomplishments of its great Chiefs of the past.

This practice has its disadvantages, however, unless later leaders are strong enough personalities to give new meaning to inherited traditions and so render them useful and significant for their own time. There is the ever-present danger of a sterile conservatism, born of the uncritical acceptance of tradition--a conservatism which stands in the way of further developments in the techniques of warfare. One example of the effects of this conservatism is the inferiority of the Prussian Army in the face of the modern methods used by the French in 1806; the traditional infallibility of Frederick the Great (1740-1786) as a victorious commander had been enough to suppress all attempts at modernizing the Prussian Army for nearly half a century.

The situation of the German Army in 1914 was much the same. It, too, was still living on the glory it had won in the war of 1870-71. Despite isolated phenomena such as Count Schlieffen, its greatest Chief of the General Staff since that date, the Army had done little or nothing to keep up with the technological advances of the following decades. Schlieffen's successor, the younger Moltke, proved to be incapable of taking immediate advantage of the possibilities offered by rapid technical advances just before World War I and of turning these into a modern concept and modern methods of warfare. The General Staff continued to work in its traditional fashion, and was forced to realize at the beginning of the war that the traditionally excellent German Army was far behind the enemy in the application of technological advances to the science of warfare. The phenomenal success of the German Army during the early phases of operations

was due less to the planned exploitation of technological developments and their conscious application to operational methods than to the remarkable fighting ability of the individual German soldier.

The advances accomplished during the course of World War I were in the nature of an inevitable adaptation to scientific developments and not due in any way to the personal initiative of the General Staff. Both Hindenburg and Ludendorff, the chief protagonists during the war, were outstanding strategists, but they were both steeped in the old tradition; they were definitely not creative personalities in the sense that Napoleon and the elder Moltke were creative. Though functioning in an age of inventions and technological progress, the General Staff had no one capable of utilizing this progress to revolutionize the techniques of warfare. On the contrary, at the beginning of World War I, the mistrust of the General Staff in technological developments was so deeply rooted that the reconnaissance reports turned in by the flyers were received with skepticism until they were confirmed by the cavalry.

The conservatism prevailing among the members of the German Army General Staff was not corrected by Germany's defeat in World War I. As a matter of fact, it was taken over almost intact by the General Staff officers assigned to the Reichswehr, and was intensified rather than mitigated by the restrictive provisions of the Versailles Treaty. The majority of the older officers, in particular, lost all contact with the military-technological development being carried out in the rest of the world and with the newer concepts of warfare occasioned by them. This situation went so far that when a young troop unit officer pointed out, in a staff study, the tremendous significance of the air force for a future war, he was threatened with dismissal by his regimental commander (a General Staff officer of repute) for writing "such utter nonsense."¹ As a further example, one might cite the bitterly adamant battle carried on into the thirties by the older generation for the retention of the lance by cavalry regiments.

There were, of course, younger General Staff officers who worked wholeheartedly for the introduction of new means and methods

of warfare, but they were unable to effect much change in the prevailing conservatism of their older colleagues. Among these younger officers, Captain Heinz Guderian (later Generaloberst) and his tireless fight for the establishment of an armored force as a decisive instrument of war deserve special mention.

During the Reichswehr period, the conservatism of the General Staff overshadowed to a greater or lesser extent all the incumbents of the post of Chief of the Troop Office, inasmuch as the latter felt themselves to be the legitimate descendants of the Chiefs of the General Staff. Since the Troop Office chiefs had a great measure of influence on the education and training of the new generation of officers, it soon became evident that the General Staff as a whole was more concerned with the preservation of tradition than with the encouragement of progressive ideas. Officers outside the General Staff had little chance of making their views heard in the face of the prevailing attitude of resistance towards all things new.

Justifiable criticism notwithstanding, it would be wrong and unfair to belittle the achievements of the Reichswehr leaders, the more so since these achievements were made under the difficult conditions imposed by the Versailles Treaty. Each General Staff officer active during that period must be accorded his share in the achievements of that time, and we have no right to diminish that share. The later development of the Armed Forces would not have been possible without their intelligent and tireless work. It was a piece of good fortune for the Luftwaffe that it gained a number of the most progressive General Staff officers for its leading positions during its most formative period.

Generaloberst Beck, who became the first Chief of the newly formed Army General Staff in 1935, was a typical representative of the Old Prussian tradition. A highly cultured officer and a man of personal distinction, he was the prototype of the Prussian General Staff officer. His outstanding contribution was his deeply felt conviction that the Army should have the final decision in matters concerning the conduct of a war, and that therefore the Army General Staff should have the chief responsibility for the planning and

preparations preliminary to war. He had little understanding for the technological advances of his time or for their potential application to the purposes of war. New thoughts and ideas moved him to skepticism insofar as they were inconsistent with his own conservative thinking. For example, he was against the establishment of an independent Luftwaffe and the formation of an armored force. His pessimistic nature was immediately against any advance which did not fit into the traditional methods of warfare. A typical example of his attitude towards modern instruments of war is the following: during a General Staff journey, whose purpose was the orientation of young General Staff officers destined for positions of command in a potential war (and in which the author participated as a director's aide for the Luftwaffe), the war games included an attack by the entire theoretical strength of the German Luftwaffe (four dive-bomber, ten bomber, and four single-engine fighter wings) on the enemy's attacking armies in a tightly limited area. Generaloberst Beck determined that the air attack had delayed the enemy's offensive by about half an hour, but that the losses suffered by the enemy had been inconsequential! An attitude such as this, based either on prejudice or on complete misunderstanding of the potential effectiveness of any other branch but the Army, was naturally not conducive to the establishment of a feeling of mutual confidence between the branches of the Armed Forces. And this was the atmosphere which prevailed when the National Socialists seized power, and the growth of the Luftwaffe began.

In 1933, after his party--the National Socialist--had come into power, Hermann Goering, the President of the National Parliament, was appointed to the position of National Commissioner of Aviation. It soon became obvious that this energetic man, who had been a successful fighter pilot during World War I, would not be content with directing the administration of Germany's commercial aviation alone. Those in a position to know were well aware of the fact that his goal was the establishment of an independent air force.

In order to nip any such development in the bud, the Reichs Minister of Defense hastily issued a decree (dated 21 March 1933) ordering the establishment of an Air Defense Office. This office was placed in charge of all matters pertaining to the establishment of a

military air force and the utilization of such force in time of war. Colonel Bohnstedt was made chief of the office, with Commander Rudolf Wenninger serving as chief of staff. The Air Defense Office was directly subordinate to the Reichs Minister of Defense and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces. One might conclude from all this that it was the intention of the Reichs Minister of Defense to establish an independent air force. It is clear, however, from records pertaining to the Air Defense Office (to be discussed later) that it was created merely to coordinate the affairs of the air force with the other branches of the Armed Forces and was not intended to be developed into the High Command of an independent branch. Even so, the duties assigned to that office were, to a certain extent, those of a Luftwaffe General Staff.

In the face of Goering's ruthless energy, the newly created Air Defense Office seemed to have little chance of maintaining itself for long. On 10 May 1933, the Reichs Minister of Defense announced that Hindenburg, President of the Reich, had authorized, on 27 April 1933, the establishment of an Air Ministry, to be under the National Defense Ministry.* Thus, on 15 May 1933, the Air Defense Office and its staff moved from the Reichs Ministry of Defense to the Air Ministry.

Goering, a political revolutionary, realized instantly the potential significance of a strong and independent air force in a future war. In his capacity as Chief of the new Air Ministry, he did everything in his power to assure that all the resources available to the nation were fully exploited in order to build up a strong air force as rapidly as possible. President Hindenburg conferred upon him the rank of an infantry general, so that he might possess the authority necessary to push through his plans for the new Armed Forces branch despite possible opposition from those of his own officers who came from the Army or Navy General Staffs. Unofficially, Hindenburg's action was tantamount to his endorsement of the Luftwaffe as an independent Armed Forces branch, having the same rights and privileges as the other two.

* Later redesignated Reichs Ministry of Defense.

During the period following its establishment on 15 May 1933, the Reichs Air Ministry assumed the functions of a Luftwaffe High Command for the units being activated under camouflage designation. The most important offices and branches of this Ministry, insofar as they were concerned with the activation and administration of the new Luftwaffe, were staffed by former General Staff officers taken over from the Army and, to a lesser extent, from the Navy. The mission assigned to these officers and their staffs was a challenge to their ability as military men, and a very rewarding one. Even the Great General Staff itself had never been faced with a challenge of such scope during peacetime. The establishment of the Luftwaffe had literally to be undertaken from the ground up; the desultory preparations accomplished during the Reichswehr period were hardly worth mentioning. Thus the challenge could be met only with the untiring devotion of every single member of the staff and with smooth coordination with the other branches of the Armed Forces. These other branches, however, were also occupied with the preliminary preparations for enlarging the Armed Forces, and it was inevitable that conflicting interests often made coordination extremely difficult. The final reviewing authority, charged with the settlement of these differences of opinion, was the Reichs Minister of War; however, his Armed Forces Office, later the Armed Forces High Command, lacked the authority necessary to enforce its recommendations. Its role in these conflicts was that of an honest broker who does his best to see that each party receives his due. Thus, the inevitable arguments regarding strategic, organizational, and economic matters had to be settled at a lower echelon by discussions between the parties concerned and by their more or less sincere attempts to find a basis for agreement.

Throughout the period of preliminary preparations and up to the outbreak of the war, each Armed Forces branch had to depend pretty much upon its own initiative. During this period, the Luftwaffe enjoyed comparative freedom in carrying out its plans, inasmuch as Hitler still had a great deal of confidence in Goering. The position of the Luftwaffe officers and their assistants, however, was not an easy one, for a certain amount of coordination with the other Armed Forces branches was inevitable. In fact, the heterogeneous composition of

the Luftwaffe officer corps rendered its position very difficult during the conferences necessitated by this minimum coordination. The Luftwaffe negotiators were usually younger in point of time in rank than their Army and Navy colleagues, and for this reason were at a certain disadvantage. Whereas the insignia of the Army General Staff officers had an aura of traditional authority about it, the Luftwaffe officer had no special insignia of his own. Unless he was personally known to his Army colleagues, he could be assumed to belong to any one of the many categories represented in the Luftwaffe officer corps and thus was often treated with the disdain and irony commonly employed with upstarts. One should not generalize, of course, but on the other hand it is clear that this attitude made the negotiations with other Armed Forces branches, and especially with the Army, unnecessarily difficult.

Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that the Luftwaffe officers stemming from the Army General Staff, the younger ones particularly, began to press for the establishment of an independent Luftwaffe General Staff with an insignia of its own, equal in importance to that of the Army General Staff. It is possible, of course, that personal ambition may have played a role in isolated cases, but there can be no doubt that the motivating factor was the urgent desire to equate the status of the Luftwaffe to that of the other Armed Forces branches and thus to give it more influence in the joint planning and negotiations.

The Luftwaffe's desire for a general staff of its own met with bitter resistance on the part of Goering's deputy, State Secretary Erhard Milch,* the officers recruited from the commercial airlines, and the members of Goering's circle. They feared, quite correctly, that the formation of a Luftwaffe General Staff would mean a decrease of their own influence, for the older ones among them possessed neither

* Editor's Note: There is much controversy concerning Milch's role in the Luftwaffe. A former Junkers employee and, prior to becoming Goering's deputy, a director of Lufthansa (the German commercial airline), Milch is well known for his ability as an organizer. See below, pp. 150 ff.

the military training nor the mental agility which would enable them to become members of such an elite staff. Inasmuch as the thoroughly trained, active Luftwaffe officers who had been taken over from the Army General Staff had, in any case, already moved into most of the key positions of the Reichs Air Ministry and the higher-level troop staffs, it was clear that their influence would grow even greater if they were granted the right to wear the traditional General Staff uniform and that they might well become annoying rivals to the reactivated and activated officers from other walks of life.

Generalmajor Walther Wever, Chief of the Air Command Office* was also unenthusiastic at first regarding the formation of a Luftwaffe General Staff, chiefly because he felt strongly that the homogeneity and unity of the Luftwaffe officer corps would be jeopardized unnecessarily by such a step. He feared that it might result in the development of a separate caste within the corps, which--in any event--was anything but homogeneous. It was his hope that the officers needed for missions of command and organization might be recruited from the ranks of the outstanding pilots in the troop units, and he was convinced that this method of selection was best suited to the preservation of the indispensable mutual confidence between the front units and the command staffs.² He ignored one important fact, however; it was precisely the best pilot personnel in the units who were the least ambitious for transfer to command staffs, especially since such transfer did not offer tangible compensation in the form of a distinctive uniform, preferential consideration for promotion, etc., as was traditional with the Army General Staff. Apart from this, the past--particularly the last war--has provided proof enough of the fact that personal courage and a talent for flying aircraft are not always an indication that their possessor also has the strength of character and the mental vision required for effective service in the responsible and often unrewarding positions within the Ministry or the command staffs.

The postwar writings of well-known flyers whose medals were

* Comparable to the Troop Office in the Reichswehr, the Air Command Office was the forerunner of the Luftwaffe General Staff.

considered (especially by Goering) to be sufficient qualification for service on the General Staff or in high-level command positions offer sufficient proof that leadership ability and military knowledge cannot always be adequately measured by decorations alone. The qualities which enable a man to function effectively in a higher position of command or on a general staff ordinarily presuppose years of military training and experience as well as a certain amount of worldly wisdom and personal maturity. The wide-spread disregard of this maxim within the Luftwaffe led not infrequently to orgies of dilettantism in Luftwaffe command agencies; Goering himself was an excellent example of this sort of thing. An officer corps capable of top-level performance is possible only if the method of selection guarantees the recruitment of the best officers, in point of strength of character, mental ability, and past performance, and if the training and orientation given them is of the type to assure homogeneity in their attitude towards their mission and in their accomplishment of it. Successful service in a troop unit is, in any case, an indispensable prerequisite.

Colonel Hans Juergen Stumpff (later Generaloberst), Chief of the Personnel Office of the Luftwaffe and a recognized authority in questions pertaining to military personnel administration, was of the opinion that, sooner or later, the Luftwaffe would have to be given a general staff of its own. In his capacity as Chief of Personnel, he was fully aware of the fact that the choice of officers to fill higher-level Luftwaffe posts would become increasingly difficult without the preliminary orientation and selective elimination provided by a general staff. Only by service on the general staff could the younger officer, who had already made his mark in combat, acquire the knowledge needed to apply his experience to the mission of command over large groups of forces. Experience had shown that the General Staff, itself composed of officers who had distinguished themselves in services at the front in World War I, provided the best opportunity for the development of a new generation of military leaders. There were sporadic exceptions, of course, but perhaps these served to prove the rule. The formation of a Luftwaffe General Staff also seemed imperative for another reason: the administration of such a complex and many-sided force as the highly technical Luftwaffe demanded the services

of officers with thorough training in a large number of fields. The Luftwaffe technical people even submitted the suggestion--through the Chief of the Air Command Office--that a Technical General Staff be formed, because an officer trained in the field of military operations could not possibly possess the specialized technical knowledge necessary for effective accomplishment of the over-all mission.

Prior to 1936, however, the thinking in regard to these problems was largely theoretical, and they were far outweighed by other, more important problems connected with the establishment of the new Armed Forces branch. The officers most intimately concerned with them, particularly the Chief of the Air Command Office, were so busy with other tasks that they had neither the time nor the opportunity to give any thought to the future form of the command apparatus of the Luftwaffe. It was not until the induction of officer flying personnel completing their courses at the Army War Academy and a number of other officers without flight training of the class of 1936, who had volunteered for transfer to the Luftwaffe, that the question of their future assignment became acute. Their training for General Staff work and their future careers were matters which required an immediate solution. The question of the coming generations of officers was also one which needed thought, for it did not seem reasonable to continue sending Luftwaffe officer candidates to the Army War Academy for training; it was obvious that the training they received there could not be specialized enough to fit them for the highly specialized missions involved in the administration and command of the Luftwaffe.

For these reasons, the decision to create an Air War Academy ripened gradually during 1935. At the same time, plans were discussed for the founding of an Air Technical Academy in order to provide technically trained specialists within the Luftwaffe officer corps to take over the positions in the Reichs Air Ministry and in the command staffs which required familiarity with the technological aspects of the Luftwaffe.

Realizing that the establishment of these two academies would be pointless until a solution had been found for the problem of a

Luftwaffe General Staff, General Wever, as Chief of the Air Command Office, finally agreed to the preliminary planning necessary to set up such a staff. The difficulties experienced by officers from the Ministry and the Luftwaffe command staffs during negotiations with the other two branches of the Armed Forces and with civilian agencies certainly influenced his decision, as did the persistent efforts of the State Secretary (Milch) and Goering's personal circle to increase their own influence and to eclipse those Luftwaffe officers who had been taken over from the Army General Staff. Thoughtful and responsible Luftwaffe officers all saw in these efforts a serious danger for the development of the new force, which could be made into an effective military instrument for the defense of the nation only if it could be kept free of intrigue and from undue influence on the part of civilian and political circles. The only possibility seemed to be the creation of a firmly established command apparatus akin to the Army General Staff.

Goering, his own opinion wavering from one moment to the next, finally allowed himself to be persuaded by the arguments of the Luftwaffe officers. The thought that his own prestige among the public and among his fellow Commanders in Chief would be greatly enhanced by the presence in his entourage of general staff officers in their distinctive uniforms certainly played just as important a role in his final decision as his recognition of the military necessity of establishing a Luftwaffe General Staff.

General Wever, the man who created the Luftwaffe General Staff and who must be considered its first--although anonymous--Chief, was not destined to witness the birth of his intellectual child; he was killed shortly before in an air crash which occurred during a routine troop inspection trip.

The order for the formation of the Luftwaffe General Staff was issued to become effective on 1 August 1936.*

* See below, Chapter 4, IV.

Chapter 3

THE PERSONNEL OF THE LUFTWAFFE GENERAL STAFF

Section I: The Chiefs of the General StaffWever

On 15 May 1933, when the Air Defense Office was transferred from the National Defense Ministry to the Reichs Air Ministry, Generalmajor Walther Wever became Chief of the Air Command Office in the new Ministry. Inasmuch as this office was charged with the administration of all questions concerning the command, organization, and training of the new Luftwaffe, it was natural that it should assume the functions of a general staff right from the beginning.

Thus, even though he did not have the official title, General Wever, as Chief of the Air Command Office, was really the first Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff. In this man, the Minister of National Defense had selected one of the very best officers--and probably the best organizer--of the Army General Staff to guide the establishment of the Luftwaffe. Without wishing to belittle Goering's contribution in any way, we must admit that all of his plans would have been amateurish piece-work without the outstanding assistance of Wever and his immediate staff.

Greeting his new assignment with enthusiasm, General Wever devoted his full attention to the new mission with typical zeal. His quick intelligence, his remarkable receptiveness towards the developments of modern technology, and his vast store of military experience soon enabled him to grasp the fundamental concepts of his mission. He worked untiringly to exploit the unusually favorable circumstances provided by the time in order to create a military instrument equal to the other Armed Forces branches for the defense of the nation. He was quick to realize that the chance given him was a unique one, and that he might take advantage of all the available national and economic resources in creating a new and unique force. He himself learned to

fly at the age of 46 and soon became one of the most enthusiastic pilots in the Luftwaffe; in this, as in other fields, he set a challenging example to young and old.

Wever got along extremely well with Goering, his Commander in Chief, since both were imbued with a passionate belief in their mission and with a fiery enthusiasm for the new Luftwaffe. His relations with State Secretary Milch, to whom he was subordinate, were also good, despite their occasional differences of opinion. By dint of exemplary tact and a willingness to remain in the background on many occasions, Wever was able to avoid serious friction.

An exemplary superior to his immediate staff, he had no difficulty in infecting them with his own enthusiasm and in persuading them unobtrusively of the validity of his own thinking. Whenever he had a free moment, he was off in his airplane to inspect units being formed and those already in existence in all the various branches of his Luftwaffe. He rarely neglected to bring along a huge box of cake when inspecting a remotely-located air base, and over coffee and cake with the young crew members, he discussed their problems with them, listened to their suggestions, and fired them anew with his own enthusiasm and elan. In this way he soon succeeded in inspiring the troop units as well as his own personal staff to extraordinary accomplishments and to ardent devotion to their work.

General Wever gave a great deal of thought and attention to the training of younger General Staff personnel as well as his own top-level officers. The speech which he made to the students and faculty of the Air War Academy on the occasion of its opening was a classical example of the inspired thinking of this great general.¹

Wever's death on 3 May 1936 was a tremendous blow to his officers and men alike. With the loss of its first Chief of the General Staff, the Luftwaffe lost the first, and perhaps the most decisive, battle of World War II. After his death, Goering praised his contribution in the following words:²

He was not a man to remain within the four walls of his study, unknown to his troops. On the contrary, he was an

inspiring example to all of us - straightforward, modest, and yet a great man and a fine officer. His contribution cannot be adequately described with mere words. The fact that the Luftwaffe exists today is due to his untiring work - to his outstanding contribution. The Fuehrer himself has given him official recognition by bestowing upon him the highest military honor possible. One bomber wing, a part of the force he created, will bear his name forevermore. Thus, his name will be immortal, as we pray to God that our people, their Armed Forces and, with it, the Luftwaffe may be immortal.

Kesselring

Wever's untimely death left a deep gap which no other officer could fill adequately--not even such an outstandingly capable one as General Albert Kesselring (later Generalfeldmarschall). Kesselring, as Chief of the Administration Office, had done an excellent job during the early period of establishment of the Luftwaffe, and now Goering appointed him Chief of the General Staff, as Wever's successor. Kesselring wrote the following in connection with his new assignment:³

By now we've come to realize just how much Wever meant for the Luftwaffe. The void left by his death was all the more painful since there were so very few older officers to fill it. As his successor, I am probably the one best qualified to sing his praises, for I have had ample opportunity to become aware of the intuitively gifted touch which distinguished his work. Because of his genius, I have not had to look for new ways, but was able to continue where he stopped. This also led to the rapid establishment of an atmosphere of confidence among myself, the individual branches of the General Staff, and the various Inspectorates. I was very fortunate in having the support of outstandingly well-qualified officers, and this made my work a pleasure.

Kesselring's words would seem to indicate that his assumption of the duties of the Chief of the General Staff was accomplished without difficulty. The close and comradely coordination existing among

the top officers of the Reichs Air Ministry, whom Wever had welded together into an effective team, assured that each one was well informed regarding the functions of the others and their common overall goal. This situation can also be regarded as an indication of the effectiveness of service on the General Staff as a factor in creating consistency of concept and action. As a result, the organization functioned like a machine which continues its work automatically, even though a new operator has replaced the old. The growth of the Luftwaffe proceeded without interruption, despite the change in personnel at the top of the General Staff; the new Chief, hard-working and tremendously energetic, devoted himself to the accomplishment of the plans developed by his predecessor.

Like his predecessor, General Kesselring made every effort to maintain a close association with the troop units. This was not difficult for him, inasmuch as he had always been an extremely popular superior during his assignment as Chief of the Administration Office. Whenever he appeared on inspection visits in that capacity, piloting his own aircraft, and inquired after the needs and wants of the troops, they could be sure that he would do anything in his power to help them. His relations with his colleagues, his subordinate officers, and the members of the troop units were characterized by the warmth and the heartfelt benevolence typical of him. These qualities assured him of the sincere and undivided devotion of his comrades and subordinates, a devotion which persists to this very day.

Although his activity as Chief of the General Staff bore valuable fruit, and his popularity among his subordinates on the General Staff and among Luftwaffe troop personnel remained undiminished, Kesselring's relations with Milch grew progressively more difficult. Milch employed every means at his disposal to maintain--and, if possible, to increase--his influence over the new General Staff. It was inevitable that Milch's efforts in this direction should incur the opposition of a man with Kesselring's strength of personality, and the latter's personal feelings and attitudes led to adamant refusal to accept Milch's interference. In the long run, however, Kesselring was no match for Milch's smooth dialectic and methods, and on 30 May 1937 Kesselring requested that he be relieved as Chief of the

General Staff. He describes the reasons for his request as follows:⁴

The disagreements, of an official as well as personal nature, between myself and my superior, State Secretary Milch, were the motivating factor in my requesting to be relieved of my assignment. I requested that I be either transferred to service with a troop unit or permitted to resign. In compliance with my request, Goering transferred me to Dresden, appointing me to the post of Commanding General, IIIrd Air Administrative Area (Luftkreis III). My successor was a close friend of mine, General der Flieger Stumpff, who had done such an excellent job in directing the establishment of the Luftwaffe officer corps; the non-commissioned officers and enlisted men under his administration viewed him as a father. As State Secretary, Milch remained Goering's deputy in the Ministry. I felt the deepest respect for Milch as a man of ability, a skilled discussion partner, an outstanding organizer, and an untiring worker, and I was sincerely pleased that the feeling of mutual confidence typical of the early period was gradually restored under my successor.

Stumpff

Prior to his appointment, by Goering, as Kesselring's successor, Generalmajor Hans Juergen Stumpff (later General der Flieger) had been Chief of the Luftwaffe Personnel Office. In that capacity, he had accomplished wonders and had more than justified his reputation as one of the Armed Forces foremost experts in matters of personnel administration. He had solved the problems connected with his mission in an exemplary fashion, and the importance of his contribution cannot be overestimated. The entire future of the Luftwaffe depended upon the quality of its officer corps; no troop can be better than its officers. When Stumpff took office as Chief of the Luftwaffe Personnel Office, he had at his disposal only 200 active officers from the 100,000-man Army (Reichswehr) on which to build a Luftwaffe officer corps. During the early years, a certain number of Army replacement officers were detached to the Luftwaffe until

the Luftwaffe had built up an adequate reserve of its own. Stumpff had had to recruit the majority of his officers, however, from the ranks of the sporting pilots, the pilots of commercial airlines, World War I flyers, and other inactive officers, and had had to try to fit the special capabilities of each individual recruit into the complicated mosaic of the new force. His success in doing so is all the more remarkable when we consider that Stumpff was unable to pilot an airplane when he was assigned to the Luftwaffe. He had to acquire an understanding for the peculiar requirements of an air force from the ground up, and in addition to this, he even learned to fly himself at a fairly advanced age.

Stumpff's mission as Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff was a particularly difficult one. To become the follower of two such intense personalities as Wever and Kesselring, at a time when the Luftwaffe was still in its formative stage, was certainly no easy task for a man who had been exclusively occupied with matters of personnel administration up to that time. Stumpff's need to familiarize himself with the fundamental requirements of his new task left him little time to devote to the establishment of a personal relationship with the troop units, as had been the case with both his predecessors. Another source of difficulty was the continual disagreements with Milch, which were becoming increasingly bitter. Moreover, the time had come when the Luftwaffe had expanded to such a degree that a reorganization of the Ministry seemed urgently necessary. Thus, during the period 1937-1939 there were a number of reorganizations, some of them coming in very close sequence, within the Reichs Air Ministry, accompanied by shifts in the responsibilities of the State Secretary and the Chief of the General Staff. These frequent organizational upheavals were bound to have a detrimental effect on the work of the General Staff as well as on the performance of the troop units.

After several attempts by Stumpff to find a solution commensurate with the problem at hand, Milch brought forth a contemplated organizational structure which was clearly incapable of meeting the military requirements involved. This continual struggle for authority finally decided General Stumpff, in the best interests of the cause, to let his own position as Chief of the General Staff be relegated to the

background and to recognize Milch as the permanent representative of the Commander in Chief.

When it became clear that even this concession had failed to improve the relations between the State Secretary and the Chief of the General Staff, Stumpff requested reassignment, to become effective on 30 January 1939. The systematic progress made in the development of the Luftwaffe during Stumpff's period as Chief of the General Staff must be considered all the more praiseworthy in view of the fact that it was accomplished in spite of internal difficulties and their deleterious influence on the conduct of business.

Jeschonnek

Colonel Hans Jeschonnek, Chief of the Operations Staff, was named as Stumpff's successor. Field Marshal Kesselring has the following to say concerning him:⁵

During the war years, the most impressive personality among the Chiefs of the General Staff was Generaloberst Jeschonnek--an unusually intelligent and energetic person. Even Jeschonnek, however, was not strong enough to oppose Goering successfully (occasionally he did succeed in opposing Hitler) in matters of decisive importance. A very definite lack of harmony brought effective coordination to a standstill.

The following passage by the historian Walter Goerlitz sheds further light on the situation:⁶

In February 1939, Colonel Hans Jeschonnek, former Commanding Officer of the Luftwaffe Training Wing (Lehrgeschwader) and Chief of the Operations Branch (Operationsabteilung) of the General Staff, became the fourth Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff. Jeschonnek, the favored protege of General Wever, was truly a representative of the younger generation, extremely gifted, of quick and dependable intelligence, precise in his thinking, a man of few personal wants, but driven by an all-consuming ambition to achieve

recognition for his service branch, the Luftwaffe. He was more of a soldier than a staff man, however. He lacked the ability to handle people, an indispensable quality for anyone who was to maintain himself in the face of Hitler's self-glorification, Goering's moodiness, the tangle of intrigues, and the continual rivalry which were the rule at the Fuehrer's Headquarters. Jeschonnek's youth and short time in rank made it all the more difficult for him to prevail against the older and higher ranking Air Fleet Commanders who came to him with their special requests, and who were not always above using their personal friendship with Goering to overrule him. The roots of his difficulties lay in the fact that he had climbed too high too soon. The exigencies of war gave him no time to attain the inner maturity he lacked; they prevented his becoming the great educator, the fatherly mentor--in short, the Scharnhorst--which the young officer corps so badly needed. Jeschonnek's career may be summarized in the saying "whom the Gods love, they call still young to their kingdom." When he saw that there was nothing he could do to avert catastrophe for his beloved Luftwaffe, and that this catastrophe meant inevitable defeat for Germany, he accepted the last consequence and ended his own life.

These passages by Kesselring and Goerlitz are a fitting summary of the tragedy attending the career of this promising young officer, a tragedy which found its climax in his suicide. Jeschonnek had begun his military career in the Prussian Cadet Corps. At the age of fifteen and one-half, he joined the 3d Company, of the 50th Lower Silesian Infantry Regiment, as second lieutenant. In 1917, at the age of seventeen, he volunteered for duty with the flying forces and, after completing his flight training, was assigned to the 10th Fighter Squadron, as a member of which he brought down two enemy aircraft before the war ended. After a period of service with the Border Patrol, he entered the Reichswehr as a member of the 11th Cavalry Regiment. Completing his training with distinction, he became one of the most promising young General Staff officers of the Reichswehr. One of the General Staff officers who transferred to the Luftwaffe, he was first assigned to the post of Adjutant to the State

Secretary of Aviation, in which capacity he had a considerable share in the preliminary organization of the Reichs Air Ministry. He was given the command of a group in the first bomber wing of the new Luftwaffe, and shortly afterwards was appointed Commanding Officer of the Training Wing. In the latter position, of course, he had had a profound influence on the development of the Luftwaffe and on the methods followed in the employment of Luftwaffe forces. And his influence became even greater as it grew more and more apparent, during the early years of the Luftwaffe's growth, that even the very best training as an Army General Staff officer and the greatest degree of receptiveness for the developments of modern technology were not sufficient to enable the top commanders of the new force to formulate a clear concept of its needs and requirements. In many respects they had to rely on the recommendations of an expert, and what could be simpler than to confer this status upon the efficient young commanding officer of the Training Wing and to avail oneself of his advice on all these matters?

On 1 October 1937, Jeschonnek became Chief of Branch I, Operations Branch of the Luftwaffe General Staff. His appointment to this most important post on the General Staff was fitting expression of the confidence which his superiors felt in him. From this point on, it was generally assumed that he was being groomed for the position of Chief of the General Staff.

If his duties increased greatly in importance with this appointment--on 1 February 1938 he became Chief of the Operations Staff (Fuehrungsstab) and on 1 November 1938 was promoted to colonel--, they became even more important when he was appointed Chief of the General Staff on 1 February 1939. On 14 August 1939 he was promoted to the rank of Generalmajor. During the campaign in Poland, he was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross, and after the triumphal performance of the Luftwaffe in the campaign in France he attained the rank of General der Flieger. At the age of forty-two, he became the youngest Generaloberst in the entire Armed Forces.⁷

The brilliant career of Jeschonnek serves as a barometer for the meteoric growth of the German Luftwaffe; at the same time, it is an individual expression of the contribution made by this talented young officer, whose tragedy lay in his youth. His contributions to the training of Luftwaffe officers, the equipment of the Luftwaffe along modern technological lines, and the development of the Luftwaffe into an effective striking instrument were undeniably great. The remarkable success of the Luftwaffe, in coordination with the Army, during the early blitz campaigns of World War II was due largely to his work. The preparation and orientation of the bomber and dive-bomber wings for their missions in these campaigns were matters to which he gave his personal attention. He shared Hitler's conviction* that, if Germany should go to war, she could attain success only if that war were brought to a rapid conclusion.

The equipment of the Luftwaffe and the production goals of Germany's air armament industry were geared to the goal of a quick war. Jeschonnek was perhaps too optimistic and too convinced of the rightness of his own thinking to envision the possibility of a long-term war and to adapt his plans accordingly. Later events bear witness to the fact that he had not taken potential developments sufficiently into account, as it is apparent--in retrospect--that he should have done. In fairness to him, however, we must recall that the Luftwaffe was forced by the pressure of events into a war for which it was not fully prepared, and that Goering and Milch never gave him a free hand in matters of armament production.

Jeschonnek's youth was a decided disadvantage in his relations with Goering. Even though the latter gave full recognition to the character and ability of his Chief of the General Staff, the younger man unconsciously created in Goering a feeling of inferiority which made him hesitate to seek his advice. As a result, Goering often made important decisions lightly without consulting his General Staff Chief in advance regarding their feasibility. This led to frequent

* Although Hitler, on occasion, also admitted the possibility that a longer war might be inevitable.

serious disagreements between the two men, and the effect upon the performance of the troops was anything but salutary. Since Jeschonnek lacked the personal qualities needed to gain his own way in the face of his superior's often amateurish decisions, there was nothing for him to do but to accept the destructive consequences created by them.

Another weakness of Jeschonnek's was his inability to handle people; the historian Walter Goerlitz emphasizes this in the passage quoted above. Jeschonnek preferred the company of younger officers, probably because of their views, based--in his opinion--on greater experience at the front, were more in keeping with his own. As a result, it was his tendency to seek their opinions rather than those of the older, more critically inclined officers. He was all too easily persuaded by the external qualities and smooth dialectic of these younger colleagues, as well as by their not always sincere agreement with him; and he granted them a great deal of independent authority in high positions. In several cases this practice had an adverse effect on the command function as well as on the work of the troops.

More often, however, Jeschonnek's difficulties arose from Goering's penchant for taking things into his own hands and from Hitler's unrealistic demands for Luftwaffe support of Army operations, and both of these factors played a role in weakening the Luftwaffe and in hastening its final decline. After the bloody action at Stalingrad, which--according to reports of the Military History Branch, Luftwaffe General Staff⁸--Jeschonnek had not approved, he foresaw clearly the tragic end of coming developments and preferred to end his own part in them by taking his life on 19 August 1943.

Korten

Another relatively young officer, General der Flieger Guenther Korten, Commanding General of the First Air Fleet, was named as Jeschonnek's successor. There were not many younger generals available from whom to choose. On the other hand, Goering did not want an older officer as Chief of the General Staff, since his confidence in his own authority was too precarious to enable him to deal with an older, more experienced man, especially one with a strong

personality. In Korten, he had a General Staff Chief who was not only an efficient General Staff officer but who also possessed a winning personality, which augured well for his relations with Hitler, the Armed Forces High Command, and other Armed Forces branches, and his subordinate Luftwaffe commanders. And in this respect, Korten certainly lived up to his promise. On 25 August 1943, he took over his difficult assignment.

When one considers that disorganization and deterioration were already wide-spread within the Luftwaffe at the time Korten took office, and that it is extremely difficult, under conditions such as these, for anyone to step unexpectedly into an entirely new position, it is no wonder that the new General Staff Chief required a certain amount of time to work into his new job. Then, too, the industry and perseverance needed for this task were not his strong point, although he did possess a certain degree of gifted intuition. Today, we cannot be sure whether Korten was consciously aware of the coming catastrophe and its significance for the Luftwaffe. It is certain, however, that he was unable to effect any fundamental changes directed towards a thoroughgoing reform--if, indeed, he had any plans of this sort. From the vantage point of the present, we are unable to determine whether or not radical action on Korten's part would have been able to avert the catastrophe. In any case, the conspiracy of 20 July 1944 brought his career to a sudden end, when he was killed by the bomb intended for Hitler. Thus, the post of Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff was vacant again, and the feverish search for a new incumbent began.

By this time, it was clear that there were very few officers acceptable to Goering from whom to choose a new General Staff Chief. An additional difficulty, however, was that none of those who came under consideration was willing to accept this unrewarding post under the difficult conditions attached to it.

Kreipe

It is illustrative of the psychological attitude of the Luftwaffe officer corps at that time that Goering encountered such great difficulty in finding anyone who was interested in the position, which,

after all, was one of the highest the Armed Forces offered. Finally, Generalleutnant Werner Kreipe declared his willingness to accept the post. Kreipe was one of the youngest generals in the Luftwaffe and had a varied career, at the front and in General Staff positions, behind him. It seems certain that he could have become an excellent General Staff Chief if he had had the proper support from his Commander in Chief. Without this support, however, he was far too young to have any influence on the ruling clique at the Fuehrer's Headquarters, or to combat effectively the growing influence of the generals in Goering's personal circle. These generals insisted on having their say on anything and everything, but not a single one of them possessed anywhere near the qualifications needed for the General Staff Chief's position.

Kreipe's activity as Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff came to an end just seven weeks after his appointment on 1 August 1944. His attempt to pit his strength against that of Hitler and Goering, especially in the matter of increased home air defense forces, was a failure. He had overestimated his chances and, after a heated argument with Hitler on 19 September 1944, the latter decided that Kreipe's services as Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff were no longer wanted, and he was forced to submit his resignation.

Koller

It was tragic for the Luftwaffe General Staff--and, indeed, for the entire command organization of the Luftwaffe--that it was not until 12 November 1944 that Goering was able to find an officer, acceptable to himself, who was willing to take over the orphaned position. During the interim period, Generalleutnant Karl Koller, Chief of the Luftwaffe Operations Staff, was placed in provisional charge of the duties of the General Staff Chief, and on 12 November 1944, he was officially assigned to that position, which he was to hold until the end of the War.

Koller was an exemplary General Staff officer, and as the chief assistant of the General Staff Chief (in his capacity as Chief of the Operations Staff), he had rendered invaluable service. He lacked

one very important qualification for the Chief's post, however, -- experience with the troops in the field. Ever since he had left the Air War Academy, where his tremendous zeal enabled him to graduate at the head of his class, he had not had a single day of service in the field. This, of course, was not his fault, but the fact remained that he much preferred service in an office, and he was an acknowledged master of the intricacies of such service. A Bavarian by birth, he did not hesitate to resort to fundamental four-letter words to emphasize a point. However, neither his military ability nor his personality was firm enough to achieve any fundamental reforms in the Luftwaffe, let alone to defend such reforms before Hitler and Goering.

Thus, the fate of the Luftwaffe ran its course; the young force never succeeded in finding a personality of the magnitude of its first General Staff Chief, General Wever, to meet the challenge of guiding it through its greatest hour of trial.

Section II: The Officer Corps of the General Staff

The transfer of a relatively small number of Army General Staff officers to the Luftwaffe provided a personnel basis, albeit a very narrow one, on which to build a Luftwaffe General Staff. A total of approximately forty Army General Staff officers switched to the Luftwaffe when the Reichs Air Ministry was established on 10 May 1933. Most of these officers, particularly the older ones, had occupied General Staff positions during World War I. Some had received their General Staff training under the Reichswehr. A few of the latter group had come to the Luftwaffe from the Navy, where they had had similar training for General Staff service.

The selection of officers for transfer was arbitrary. At the order of the Minister of War, all those officers whose names appeared on the so-called "pilot roster," i. e. all those who, at some time or another, had seen service as pilots or had completed flight training, were automatically assigned to the Luftwaffe. This order also included officers of the General Staff. Inasmuch as the total number of officers affected by the order was so small, the Reichs Minister of War

authorized the Luftwaffe Personnel Office, within the framework of its recruiting among inactive officers, to accept former Army General Staff officers who had not had pilot training, provided they volunteered for Luftwaffe service. The success of this recruitment action was fairly slight, however, and it did not relieve the critical shortage of General Staff officers to any great extent.

Since the number of Army General Staff officers taken over by the Luftwaffe was still not sufficient--especially in point of older officers--to fill the top posts of the Reichs Air Ministry, the Reichs Minister of War, with the concurrence of the Army High Command, authorized the assignment to the Luftwaffe of several outstanding officers from the latter agency who had never had anything to do with flying, but who seemed to be eminently well-qualified for the posts they were to fill. As it turned out, it was precisely these officers who played the most decisive part in the growth and development of the Luftwaffe, because the posts to which they were assigned in the Reichs Air Ministry were key positions. Three of these officers in succession moved from their positions into the post of Chief of the General Staff. For this reason, their names and their first assignments in the Luftwaffe should be mentioned at this point:

Colonel Walter Wever - Chief of the Air Command Office
 Colonel Albert Kesselring - Chief of the Luftwaffe Administration Office
 Colonel Hans Juergen Stumpff - Chief of the Luftwaffe Personnel Office
 Colonel Karl Kitzinger - later Chief of the Luftwaffe Procurement and Supply Office

The Chief of the Technical Office of the Reichs Air Ministry was also a key military position. Under the circumstances obtaining at that time, the Technical Office was equal in importance to the Air Command Office. Since the functions of the Technical Office could not be performed by anyone not well-versed in aeronautical and technological matters, the post of Chief was given to Colonel Wilhelm Wimmer, a former pilot officer--the only chief's position to be so filled. Colonel Wimmer was the only office chief who was not a

member of the General Staff. His qualifications for the job were excellent, however. In the Army Ordnance Office he had been in charge of all matters pertaining to aeronautical developments, and his new office merely required him to continue his work on a larger scale. A specialist in his field, Wimmer did an outstanding job. When the Luftwaffe General Staff came into being, Wimmer's qualifications and contributions were recognized by immediate assignment to that body. His assignment also served to emphasize the significance of the Technical Office for the command function, and to bind it more closely to the General Staff. With Wimmer's appointment, all the key positions within the Reichs Air Ministry were filled by outstanding older General Staff officers, an assurance that the administration of the Ministry and the new troop would be carried out in accordance with recognized military principles.

In filling the command staff positions of the so-called Air Administrative Areas, Luftwaffe leaders gave first preference to older officers who had already retired. All of them had been members of the flying forces during World War I and had gone on to fill General Staff positions. Again, these officers constituted a guarantee that administration at the troop level would also be in line with traditionally tried and proven military concepts. Some of the officers in this group who deserve special mention are Generals Leonhard Kaupisch, Hans Halm, Edmund Wachenfeld, Karl Eberth, and Karl Schweickhardt. It was these men who were responsible for putting into practice the plans devised by the Luftwaffe General Staff--an accomplishment whose importance was certainly as great as that of the work done by the General Staff itself.

There were very good reasons for insisting upon military ability and military experience on the part of the officers selected for the top-level positions in the Reichs Air Ministry. The Reichs Minister of War as well as the members of the other Armed Forces branches, who had a natural interest in the growth of the Luftwaffe, were well aware that the new force could be made into an effective striking instrument only if its key positions were under firm military control from the very beginning. This would offset the effects of an extremely heterogeneous officer corps and of a Commander in Chief,

whose appointment was chiefly the result of Party considerations. Since they knew that Goering's revolutionary thinking and fiery enthusiasm for the new branch were alone not sufficient guarantee for the systematic development of the Luftwaffe along approved military lines, both the Army and the Navy went out of their way to free their best-qualified officers for Luftwaffe service. And since Goering was kept much too busy by his many and varied offices to devote his personal attention to the development of the Luftwaffe, the main responsibility devolved upon these men. They formed a necessary counter-balance to Milch, who--as former director of the Lufthansa--did his best to minimize the military influence so that he might be free to operate with the civilian methods more familiar to him.

The fact that the General Staff officers were able to prevail to a certain extent over this attitude, and to accomplish as much as they did, was due in great part to the efforts of the young aides who had come with them from the Army and Navy. Although the top General Staff officers had been selected for their all-around military ability, without insistence on training within the flying forces, flight training was a prerequisite in filling the subordinate General Staff positions. Thus the younger officers brought with them a body of expert knowledge and experience, gained through long years of training carried out in secrecy. The Chief of the Luftwaffe Personnel Office was extremely wise in assigning these younger officers to posts as the chief assistants of the older officers who, although undeniably men of outstanding military reputation, did not always possess the necessary specialized knowledge in the field of technology.

As branch chiefs, group leaders, staff assistants, and as chiefs of staff in the Air Administrative Areas, these young men had a decisive share in the development of the Luftwaffe. The names of these officers, who--until the official establishment of the Luftwaffe General Staff in 1936--made up the command organization of the Luftwaffe, are of interest to us, for nearly all of them later became wartime Luftwaffe generals. They were as follows:

Colonels Helmuth Felmy, Hugo Sperrle, Nikolaus Maier, Ernst Mueller, Heinrich von Dankelmann, and Ludwig Wolff;

Lt. Colonels Wilhelm Speidel, Dietrich Volkmann, Egon Doerstling, Max von Pohl, Fritz Loeb, Rudolf Wenninger, Hans Geissler, Hans Ritter, and Weygand; Majors Paul Deichmann, Josef Kammhuber, Otto Hoffmann von Waldau, Rudolf Meister, Walter Boenicke, Hans Jeschonnek, Herhudt von Rohden, Walter Schwabedissen, and Heinz von Wuehlisch; Captains Hermann Plocher, Josef Schmid, Hans Seidemann, Erdmann, Andreas Nielsen, Alfred Boner, and Berchtenbreiter.

These officers, together with the older officers previously named, made up the basis of the Luftwaffe General Staff established in 1936. They were all on the so-called General Staff list maintained by the Personnel Office, and their records were administered separately. Their inclusion on this list authorized them to wear the insignia of the General Staff (crimson collar patch and a double crimson stripe on their uniform trousers) and to add the phrase "General Staff Corps" to their rank.

A few more officers were taken over by the Luftwaffe in 1936 in order to supplement the General Staff roster. These had all had flight training, and most of them had still been in training at the Army War Academy at the time the Luftwaffe was officially established. Ten more officers from the same Academy class, who, however, had had no flight training, volunteered and were accepted for Luftwaffe service in an attempt to bridge the gap in time before the first regular Luftwaffe replacement personnel could be expected in 1938. A like number of officers graduating from the Army War Academy in 1937 were also appropriated for the Luftwaffe. After 1937, however, the Luftwaffe was able to draw its own replacement personnel from the Air War Academy, which had begun operations in 1935.

Inasmuch as the personnel reserve from which the Luftwaffe General Staff was built was extremely small and was, in fact, insufficient to provide the officer personnel needed to fill all the positions in the fast-growing Ministry--not to mention the staff positions in the troop units, which were growing ever more numerous--, it was

necessary even during peacetime to place a number of additional officers on General Staff status, i. e. to add them to the General Staff roster, even though these newcomers might not possess the traditional General Staff training. This was the case, for example, with officers who had completed university or technical college training and who had made their mark as "engineer officers"; or officers who had never had General Staff training but who had served in a General Staff because of a lack of enough officers with the required training, and had proved themselves exceptionally qualified over a period of time. Officers in the latter group were accepted only under exceptional circumstances. Every effort was made to compensate for the lack of formal training of these outsiders by giving them regular staff assignments and by requiring their participation in staff exercises.

When the order for the establishment of a Luftwaffe General Staff was issued, Luftwaffe leaders immediately set to work to determine which positions in the Ministry and troop units should, in future, be filled by General Staff officers. The number of these positions--listed by the Chief of the General Staff in concurrence with the Luftwaffe Personnel Office in the order of their importance to the functions of command, organization, procurement and supply, training, and technological development--was so great that, in the beginning, there was no chance whatsoever of their all being staffed by General Staff personnel. General Staff officers were assigned to only the most important of them, the rest being filled provisionally by officers from any and all sources. A further undesirable consequence of the shortage in officer personnel was the fact that hardly any of the Luftwaffe General Staff officers were qualified, in point of time in rank, for the assignments given them. It lay in the nature of the situation, partly because of the newness of the missions involved (there were no established procedures to follow), that there was a certain amount of non-productive effort. The fact that these young officers were able to accomplish the tasks assigned to them despite the attendant difficulties was a tribute to the thoroughness of the General Staff training they had received in the Army and Navy.

Even by the time World War II began, the Luftwaffe had not yet succeeded in acquiring enough trained General Staff officers to

meet its needs. As the war progressed, the discrepancy between supply and demand became astronomical due to the increase in staff positions and the losses in officer personnel inflicted by enemy action. On 1 March 1944, of a total of 331 Luftwaffe General Staff corps officers, 77 had been killed in action, were missing, or had met death in air crashes, and another 10 had been taken prisoner after emergency landings in enemy territory. We have no information on how high these losses were at the end of the war; we can assume with certainty, however, that they had increased.

The Chiefs of both the Luftwaffe General Staff and the Luftwaffe Personnel Office did their best to increase the reservoir of replacement officers available to the Luftwaffe. In an attempt to master the chronic personnel shortage, they reduced the length of the training courses at the Air War Academy and discontinued the courses at the Air Technical Academy. In recruiting, the entrance requirements were reduced and this, in combination with the necessarily shorter training period, which could not possibly cover more than the bare essentials, inevitably led to a lowering of the performance standards as the war continued. On occasion, in order to meet the demands for replacement personnel, it even proved necessary to assign an entire contingent of officers directly to the General Staff, without first sending them to the Air War Academy for training. The order for this action,⁹ issued by the Luftwaffe Personnel Office on 6 March 1942, gives an enlightening picture of the personnel situation faced by the Luftwaffe General Staff at this point.

During the war, the personnel shortage was further aggravated by the necessity of periodically assigning the General Staff officers to duty at the front in order that they might bring their front-line experience up to date and maintain their contact with the troops. This meant that approximately twenty-five percent of the General Staff officers were not available for General Staff duty at any one time. The demand for officers with General Staff training also increased steadily with the need to replace older officers promoted to higher positions in the command staffs--this in addition to the need for replacements to fill positions falling vacant because of the death, illness, or the incompetence of their incumbents.

In the fall of 1942, the shortage in Luftwaffe General Staff officers became so critical that the Chief of the General Staff, after securing Hitler's concurrence, was forced to issue a second order.¹⁰ The text of this order presents a revealing picture of Hitler's disdain for the General Staff on the one hand, and his tacit admission on the other hand that the part played by the General Staff in the guidance and training of younger officers for command responsibility was an indispensable one. The conclusion of the order presents the policies of personnel administration long followed by the General Staff as if they were new ideas conceived by the Fuehrer; and gives emphatic expression to the latter's wish that the General Staff create a generation of younger officers more amenable to his "brilliant concepts" than the older generation, handicapped as it was by experience, could ever be.

The order, however, had only a limited effect on the personnel situation of the Luftwaffe General Staff. An appendix to the order authorized the filling of 82 positions--formerly held, in theory, by General Staff officers--by officers from the troop units, or from other sources. In reality, however, since the personnel shortage had made it impossible to fill all these positions with General Staff officers in the first place, the gain was theoretical rather than practical. The order resulted in very few changes in the incumbency of the really important positions, and the continuing shortage in officer personnel still precluded the desirable frequent alternation between General Staff and front-line duty. Throughout the war the Luftwaffe General Staff was to suffer from the effects of an acute shortage in qualified officer personnel. Attempts to compensate for this lack by utilizing officers who had demonstrated their ability in action proved unsuccessful in the majority of cases. The General Staff officers freed by this practice for duty with the troops were usually specialists, who lacked the all-around training and experience necessary to enable them to handle the over-all command of an operation. As a result, the troop unit staffs were filled with specialists, each of whom considered himself infallible in his own particular field, and the integration of these men into the over-all mission often required more time and effort on the part of the unit chiefs of staff than their ultimate contribution was worth. Moreover, this practice was bad for the troops in the long

run, for specialization of this sort often resulted in so much pointless red tape that the troops lost all confidence in their leaders.

As a result of measures of this sort, most of them desperate attempts to fill the positions for which General Staff officers were considered absolutely necessary, the Luftwaffe command organization--at all echelons--moved farther and farther away from the principles followed by the old, traditional General Staff. The most important thing we can learn from this situation is that the lack of thorough training in wartime and the failure to establish an adequate reserve of trained General Staff officers are bound to have catastrophic consequences. This was just as true for the Luftwaffe as it was for the other Armed Forces branches and, ultimately, for the over-all conduct of World War II.

Section III: The Career of a Luftwaffe General Staff Officer

The selection of candidates for General Staff training was not based in any way on their promise of ability in any one specialized field. Specialization, in the beginning, was reserved for the Technical Academy; later, it was decided to discontinue any further training for personnel of the Technical General Staff because of the lack of qualified instructors. Still later, when the courses at the Technical Academy were abolished, there was only one General Staff.

During the period of their attendance at the Air War Academy it was usual for the candidates to develop certain individual interests and abilities, and these were used as a basis for the recommendations made regarding their future assignments, although such a recommendation did not mean that an officer was necessarily confined to the suggested field for the remainder of his career. The interests and abilities which he had demonstrated at the Academy, however, were used as a basis in determining his initial assignment to the General Staff. An officer's first assignment to the General Staff after successful completion of the Academy course was his so-called "probationary year," during which he was "assigned to service with the General Staff." In case of necessity (and this was the rule rather than the exception), regulations permitted the assignment to the

General Staff of Luftwaffe officers who were "recommended with reservations" from the Academy. Officers in this category were required to serve two probationary years to prove their suitability before they were officially assigned to the Luftwaffe General Staff. At the time of his official assignment to the General Staff, the officer automatically became a member of the General Staff corps and was eligible for any position on the General Staff for which he could prove himself qualified, provided, of course, that he completed his occasional assignments to troop duty satisfactorily.

It lay in the nature of the situation, i. e the officer's previous assignment to a particular branch, such as flying forces, antiaircraft artillery, or Luftwaffe signal forces, that a certain amount of specialization was unavoidable. His previous assignment was not an arbitrary factor in determining his function in the General Staff; however, in the majority of cases it was the decisive factor, chiefly because of the critical officer shortage and the resultant impossibility of giving each officer all-around practical training prior to his assignment to the General Staff.

The ideal, as it had been envisioned in the preliminary planning, was to give each General Staff officer a kind of universal training, which would permit him to fill satisfactorily any position within the Luftwaffe. At no time during the history of the Luftwaffe was this ideal attained; the reasons have been discussed in part in the preceding sections. Chief among them was the lack of time, which made it impossible to give each individual officer a military education well-rounded enough to familiarize him with all three branches (flying forces, antiaircraft artillery, and Luftwaffe signal forces) and their technical problems to such a degree that he would be able to fill any position in any branch without qualification.

When the Technical General Staff was abolished, the Luftwaffe Engineer Corps assumed its functions. The members of the Engineer Corps had the status of government civil servants; they were technical experts, who rendered invaluable service in their fields during the war, especially in the troop unit staffs or in the troop units themselves. The role they played as advisors to Ernst Udet, the Chief of Luftwaffe

Procurement and Supply, and later to Milch, however, is less worthy of unqualified admiration. It seems certain that many of the decisions made by Udet and Milch would have been different if their advisors had not been pure technical people but rather military men with General Staff training and with sufficient understanding of technological developments to coordinate them fully with military requirements. Weapons development and armament are matters of the greatest importance to the commitment of a technical force during wartime. The failure of military leaders to retain their influence in these matters is tantamount to their renouncing any voice in the decisions concerning the weapons with which they are to fight.

During the short period of existence of the German Luftwaffe, events happened too rapidly to provide an answer to the question of whether or not it might have been expedient to maintain a technical general staff in addition to the Engineer Corps or, possibly, to transform the latter group into a technical general staff. It probably would have been a question of providing sufficient technological training for career General Staff officers to enable them to formulate military requirements in such a way that a technical team could convert them into applicable technological requirements. Such training, however, would not have been feasible for the General Staff, because the training period was far too short. On the other hand, the members of the Engineer Corps were required to qualify for the rank of a Luftwaffe reserve officer during compulsory periods of service in troop units, and in most cases this requirement was met satisfactorily, even during wartime. Engineers were no substitute for a technical general staff, of course, but at least they received enough general military training that they were able to correlate technological potentialities to military requirements. On a small scale, e. g. in the troop unit staffs, things worked out very well, but there can be no doubt that the military background of the Engineers occupying higher echelon posts was inadequate to the missions they were called upon to accomplish.

Once the first classes from the Technical Academy had been assimilated into the General Staff and the Academy itself had been incorporated for all practical purposes (even before its final

deactivation) into the Air War Academy, there was only one uniform training program for all General Staff candidates. The original plans had envisioned a system of assignments for each individual officer designed to help him to familiarize himself with a variety of different fields and the routine procedures inherent in each and to prepare himself to take over an assignment as a higher-level troop officer. This plan did not envision narrowly-defined careers within the General Staff. In theory, each officer was to familiarize himself with the field of supply (Quartermaster) operations first, and then move on to assignments in the Ic (Intelligence) and Ia (Operational Planning) categories. It was only in rare instances, however, that it was possible to carry out this systematic orientation, and limited career fields--the very thing the planners wanted to avoid--were the inevitable result. In the majority of cases, the General Staff officer remained in the field of his first assignment until he transferred back to a troop unit or, in rare instances, was appointed to department chief's post (i. e. chief of an office or branch). * Normally, the department chief's posts were reserved for officers who had rendered especially valuable service in operational planning positions.

Like the entire organizational structure of the Luftwaffe General Staff, the career fields which inevitably developed were closely akin to their counterparts in the Army General Staff. They were the following:

Ia - Operations - command, troop commitment, training

Ic - Intelligence - gathering and evaluation of intelligence data, study and evaluation of foreign air forces and the war potential of possible enemy nations

Quartermaster service - organization, procurement and supply, armaments

Communications service - signal communications, aircraft reporting, flight traffic control.

* See below, p. 61.

The operational planning field was naturally the most popular, since the operations officer of a staff is the prince among peers, and his mission, the over-all operational command of the forces at his disposal, has always been the most interesting on the General Staff. Since systematic early selection and preliminary training were not always feasible--in fact, candidates were usually not selected until after they had graduated from the Academy--occasional errors in judgment in filling the operational planning positions were bound to occur. The frequent reassignments resulting from such errors were disrupting, of course, for troop units and the command apparatus alike.

The selection of candidates for the intelligence positions was less difficult, since the missions involved did not require so much troop unit experience as those of the operations officer, but presupposed rather a special talent, easily identified at an early stage of the officer's career. The ranks of the intelligence officers provided incumbents for the department chiefs, group leaders, and staff assistants positions in Branch 5, (Foreign Air Forces) of the General Staff. Whenever air attache positions were filled by General Staff officers, these too were usually selected from among the intelligence personnel.

The Quartermaster service, an extremely important branch and one which served as excellent training for the General Staff officer, required the largest number of personnel, for its comprehensive organization included a great many posts. The strength of the quartermaster officer contingent reflected the importance which Germany's military leaders attached to armament and supply. To be qualified for service with the quartermaster branch, an officer needed organizational talent, a background of long and varied experience with troop units, and a comprehensive understanding of the technological requirements of the Luftwaffe. Beginning their careers as aides to the quartermaster and senior quartermaster officers in higher-level troop staffs or as supply officers at intermediate echelons, these officers usually advanced to posts on the staff of the Quartermaster General or with the agencies responsible for guiding the wartime economy. Occasionally, these officers were also given an opportunity for assignment to an operational planning position, but unfortunately this was the exception rather than the rule.

From the very beginning, signal communication developed into a highly-specialized career field on the General Staff, one which was reserved for officers from the Luftwaffe signal communications units. It was impossible for officers coming from the other branches (flying forces and antiaircraft artillery) to acquire the necessary specialized knowledge during the course of their General Staff training. In a number of cases, however, the reverse proved true, namely that officers from the Luftwaffe signal units moved into the other fields represented in the General Staff. During the war a great many younger signal officers were profitably assigned to intelligence positions, where their familiarity with radio intercepting techniques was put to good use in gathering information.

A General Staff career usually found its climax in assignment to a department chief's post or branch chief's post in the Luftwaffe High Command or in the Reichs Air Ministry. Assignment to one of these top-level posts was not directly dependent on the candidate's past career as such, but rather on his personal and professional qualifications for the position in question. The position of "chief" was the highest goal of the General Staff officer; at the same time it represented eligibility for a position of command in an operational unit staff. This criterion of eligibility was often ignored during the war, to the inevitable detriment of the quality of leadership within the troop units. Goering's policy of favoritism, his unrealistic ideas--born of his total lack of experience--, and the failure of his later personnel chiefs to comprehend the duties and responsibilities of a higher-level commander, often resulted in the assignment to such positions of men who had had no training whatsoever for the responsibility involved and who were thus totally inadequate to their missions. Apart from thoroughly justifiable exceptions, a higher-level troop commander from division level upwards ought to have qualified for and held successfully a department chief's post. For only a man who has served in such a capacity himself is able to judge the competence with which his staff is governed and the effectiveness of his own advisors. His confidence in staff and advisors and his trust in his chief of staff are indispensable factors in assuring him the freedom of action which he needs if he is to attain military success.

The German Luftwaffe was too young and the choice among

experienced General Staff officers too restricted to permit it to reach the theoretical ideal, either before or during the war. In cases where the department chiefs were really excellent, their superiors were understandably reluctant to part with them and often did everything in their power to prevent their assignment to the higher troop positions, for which they would have been so well qualified, until it was too late, and the nerve-racking atmosphere of General Staff service had taken its toll of their energy and elan.

In retrospect it is clear that the tendency towards the development of distinct and narrowly-defined career fields within the General Staff, although made inevitable by the conditions obtaining during the period of its growth, resulted in a highly undesirable kind of specialization, which was detrimental to the command function as a whole and which jeopardized seriously the traditional practice of utilizing the General Staff officer in a variety of capacities.

Section IV: The Officers from the Austrian General Staff

In 1938 the German Luftwaffe General Staff received welcome reinforcements in the persons of Austrian General Staff officers and officer candidates who had completed pilot training within the Austrian National Army. Generaloberst Erhard Raus has given a brief summary of the career of these officers.¹¹

The Austrian National Army had no provision for general staff training until 1924, inasmuch as this had been prohibited by the Treaty of St. Germain. In 1924, with the knowledge of Italy and the silent consent of the other victor nations, a war academy was created in Vienna under the camouflage title "Military Evaluation Commission." The first course was a selective one for those officers who had been assigned towards the end of the war (1917) to Belgrade and Ljubljana for a three months' training course for candidates for the Imperial and Royal Austrian General Staff. Because these officers were so urgently needed, their training course in Vienna was shortened to three to four months, after which--provided the Commission approved them--they were immediately assigned to General Staff posts. Approximately one-half of this first group was able to qualify for General Staff service under these conditions.

Beginning in 1925, an intensive three-year course was introduced, admittance to which was contingent upon successful completion of an extremely difficult aptitude examination. The new course had even higher requirements than training under the prewar Imperial and Royal Austrian Army. Each course closed with a severe subject matter examination. The chief subjects studied were strategy, tactical warfare, and aerial warfare; which meant that each graduate was required to pass examinations in all three fields. . . . Of 140 candidates who took the qualifying examination with me, only twenty-five passed. After completion of the three-year course, only twelve of us passed the final examinations successfully, and of these twelve, six were accepted for ultimate assignment to the General Staff after serving a probationary period of two years with that body. Prior to beginning the three-year course (which, incidentally, was so difficult that two of my comrades literally worked themselves to death), the candidate was required to serve one year with an armed forces branch other than his own.

There was no separate air force general staff. General-major Loehr* (later Generaloberst) was in charge of this sector of the Austrian armed forces and was permitted to select whatever assistants he might need to help him establish the newly authorized air force. The few Austrian general staff officers later taken over into the German Army were just as well trained and just as competent as their German comrades.

Generaloberst Raus' letter makes it abundantly clear that the Austrian officers who joined the German General Staff had enjoyed thorough and careful training. After a short period of orientation regarding the specific requirements of the Luftwaffe, some fifteen Austrian officers took their place on the Luftwaffe General Staff; their status equalled in every respect that of their German colleagues. Their work, both before and during the war, was uniformly valuable.

* Alexander Loehr, Chief of Staff of the Austrian Air Forces and later Commander in Chief of the German Fourth Air Fleet. Generalmajor Loehr was executed in Yugoslavia in 1946.

Chapter 4

ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTIONS OF
THE LUFTWAFFE GENERAL STAFFSection I: DefinitionsThe Armed Forces High Command

The German Armed Forces did not have a single, uniform Armed Forces General Staff. Instead, each of the services (Army, Navy, and Air) had its own general staff, whose structure as well as training were designed to meet its own particular needs. The officers making up the General Staff of the Armed Forces High Command were selected from among the general staff members of all three branches; however, there was no provision for giving them any common training for their new, common mission.

Inasmuch as the majority of the Luftwaffe General Staff, including its leading personalities, had come from the Army General Staff, it was natural that its organizational structure should be closely akin to that of the latter. Neither singly nor together, however, did the general staffs of the three Armed Forces branches ever play such an important role in the preparations for national defense or in the conduct of the war as the Great General Staff of former times. Whereas the Army Great General Staff was an instrument of command which was subordinate only to the Emperor, i. e. responsible only to the chief of state, the general staffs of the three Armed Forces branches had only limited authority within their own services and were subordinate to their respective commanders in chief. They, in turn, were no longer concerned with the conduct of war on behalf of the state, but only with the specific roles to be played by their own services within the framework of such a war. It must be admitted, however, that they had a good deal more freedom in this respect than would have been conducive to effective over-all planning on a joint basis. The Armed Forces High Command, that body which ought to have assumed responsibility for firm coordination of all the various

aspects of national defense planning, was simply too weak for its task. The commanders in chief of the three individual services bowed to the authority of Hitler in his capacity as chief of state and commander in chief of the Armed Forces, but refused to acknowledge the applicability of orders coming from the Armed Forces High Command itself unless they were issued explicitly in Hitler's name.* The position of chief of the Armed Forces High Command was bound to be insignificant as long as it was occupied by such a colorless individual as Generalfeldmarschall Wilhelm Keitel.

This organization might have functioned satisfactorily during peacetime, but experience has shown us that it was totally inadequate for the successful conduct of a war. War can be waged effectively only if all the components of a nation's armed forces can be brought to bear in coordinated action at the will of a single superior commander. And if this commander is not a soldier himself, it is imperative that he have at his disposal an operations staff which is capable of accomplishing its mission and which has the necessary authority to do so. The Third Reich did not possess an armed forces general staff of this type, and as the war progressed, chaos among her military leaders increased.

The Operations Staff of the Luftwaffe High Command

It is necessary to point out that the Operations Staff of the Luftwaffe, although it bore the designation Luftwaffe General Staff, actually had little in common with the traditional concept of such a body. The responsibilities coming within its purview were, in large part, those normally associated with a general staff; the composition of its personnel, however, fell far short of traditional standards. Only a fraction of the positions--albeit the most important ones--on the General Staff were filled by General Staff officers. Approximately

* See below, pp. 133 ff.

twenty percent of the positions were in this category,* while the remaining eighty percent were filled by reserve officers, civil servants, and technical specialists.¹ Even so, this body was the operations staff of the Chief of the General Staff, and the most important positions on it were occupied by General Staff officers; because of this, both its name and recognition of its essential character seem to be justified.

The Luftwaffe General Staff

Neither the Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff nor any member of that staff had command authority over the troops, except for those agencies which were directly subordinate to the Luftwaffe General Staff, such as the Inspectorates and the Air War Academy. The Chief of the General Staff found his primary function in acting as first advisor to his Commander in Chief in all matters pertaining to the operational command, training, organization, and supply of the troop units. Thus, he and his staff actually constituted the operations staff of the Commander in Chief, and the Chief of the General Staff could issue orders to the troops or to subordinate command agencies only in the name of and at the direction of the former. Moreover, the Luftwaffe General Staff was only one part of the Luftwaffe High Command, and thus can hardly be compared with a general staff in the traditional sense. It may clarify our thinking regarding the concept "general staff," i. e. as it existed within the Luftwaffe, if we consider it primarily not as an organizational entity, but rather as a group of individual officers, selected in accordance with specific criteria and trained especially for assignment to the most important command positions within the Luftwaffe. The records of these men were administered separately in the Luftwaffe Personnel Office and were available at all times for inspection by the Chief of the General Staff.

* Editor's Note: The number of General Staff officers in the Luftwaffe was, relatively speaking, small; only 294 as of 1 July 1944, and this number included General Staff officers assigned to front-line units, lower echelon headquarters and various liaison posts, as well as those assigned to the Luftwaffe High Command.

The troop unit staffs preserved the traditional concept of the general staff most faithfully. The organizational structure here was based on traditional principles, particularly the ones followed by the staffs of comparable level in the Army. Even in the troop staffs, however, only the most important posts were slated for General Staff officers, while their aides were all recruited from other sources.

Apart from minor modifications dictated by the shortage in qualified officer personnel, the outward structure of the General Staff agencies remained substantially the same. The personnel limitations which we have discussed must be taken into consideration in any evaluation of the organization of the staff and the responsibilities assigned to its various components.

In order that we may be better able to comprehend the material to be discussed in the following sections, it seems expedient at this point to explain certain terms and concepts.*

1. Top-level organization - the organizational structure of the Armed Forces High Command during peacetime.
2. Wartime top-level organization - the above during wartime.
3. Battle order - the organizational structure of a higher-echelon agency, such as an Air Fleet, corps, or Air Administrative Command.
4. Order of battle - the roster of subordinate troop units assigned to higher-echelon command agency.
5. Types of Subordination:
 - a. Administrative subordination - all the units comprising the order of battle of a superior headquarters.

* For original German terms, see glossary.

b. Operational subordination - subordination for the duration of a specific operation (also called tactical subordination).

6. Duty and position roster - Whereas special wartime strength authorization tables and service regulations, if applicable, were issued for all troop units, headquarters, and staffs, the staffs of the Reichs Ministry of Aviation and the office of the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe (later redesignated Reichs Air Ministry and Luftwaffe High Command) were not subject to standard authorizations and regulations. The organizational structure of these bodies was determined by the strength authorization and service regulations contained in Special Appendix 1 of the Luftwaffe Mobilization Plan.²

7. Office - the largest administrative entity within a ministry, such as Personnel Office; the chief of such an office was an office chief, and his status was equivalent to that of a division commander.

8. Department - an office was made up of a group of departments or branches whose head was the department chief. His status was that of a brigade commander.

9. Branch - a subdivision consisting of several smaller entities of an office or department and presided over by the branch chief. As an example, Branch 1 of the General Staff was made up of the groups Operations Branch, Flying Forces; Operations Branch, Antiaircraft Artillery Forces, etc. The branch chief normally had the status of a regimental commander.

10. Group - the group was composed of several substaffs headed by a group leader. For example, the Antiaircraft Artillery Group consisted of the substaffs Ia, 1 (operations), Ia, 2 (training), Ia, 3 (technological requirements), etc.

11. Substaff - the smallest entity with responsibility for a specifically limited subject matter field; its chief was the technical aide.

Section II: Organizational Forerunners of the Luftwaffe
General Staff

The Air Defense Office of the Reichs Ministry of Defense

The organizational structure of the Luftwaffe General Staff had its beginnings in the Air Defense Office, which came into being on 1 April 1933 as a part of the Reichs Ministry of Defense. Based on a decree³ from the Minister of Defense the Air Defense Office was created by combining the various Army and Navy agencies within the Reichswehr which had occupied themselves secretly with matters pertaining to the establishment of an air force for Germany.

As early as 15 July 1932, the Troop Office of the Army had requested a formulation of the principles to be followed in the future organization of an air force. The Int(L), (Inspectorate 1 (Air)),* that section within the Troop Office which dealt with such matters, replied with a communication⁴ dated 10 August 1932, summarizing a suggested organizational plan for the new air force. The plan provided for the following organizational subdivisions: one branch for air force matters within the Troop Office, i. e. a part of the Army General Staff; one branch for air force matters within the Defense Office; one Inspector for the Flying Forces within the Defense Office; one Air Force Branch within the Armed Forces Armaments Office; one liaison officer in the Armed Forces Supply Office and one in the T-1 (Operations Branch).

According to the suggested plan, the air forces themselves were to be subordinated to the Chief of the Army Directorate. This furnishes conclusive proof of the fact that the contemplated air force was not to be an independent service under the Armed Forces, but rather an Army air force, whose commander would be a member of the Army General Staff (at that time still called the Troop Office). A separate air force, with independent missions within the framework of a war, was still a utopian fantasy in the eyes of the Army General

* A cover name for the forerunner of the Luftwaffe General Staff.

Staff of that day; moreover, it would have meant a weakening of the Army's dominant position in the hierarchy of military command.

Since the beginning of 1932, questions connected with a naval air force had come under the purview of a special air defense group within the Navy High Command.

With the creation of the Air Defense Office as a separate entity within the Reichs Ministry of Defense, both the Army and Navy, of course, had to give up all hope of ever maintaining air forces of their own.

Colonel Bohnstedt became Chief of the Air Defense Office, and Commander (Navy) Wenninger his chief of staff. Branch 1 of the Air Defense Office was divided into two subbranches, L1 (Army) and L1 (Navy). Each subbranch was composed of three groups, as follows: Group I - (Tactics); Group II - (Organization); Group III - (Training).

To all intents and purposes, Branch 1 constituted the General Staff of the contemplated air force. Its personnel roster is of interest, inasmuch as most of the names appearing on it were to attain prominence later on in key posts of the Luftwaffe General Staff:

Office Chief: Colonel Bohnstedt
 Liaison Officer to the Reichs Commissioner of Aviation:
 Captain Hans Jeschonnek
 Chief of Staff: Commander (Navy) Rudolf Wenninger
 Sub-Branch 1, L1 (Army): Lt. Colonel Dietrich Volkmann
 Group I (Tactics): Captain Josef Kammhuber*
 Group II (Organization): Captain Wilhelm Speidel
 Captain Schnepfer
 Group III (Training): Captain Gerd von Massow
 Captain Rudolf Meister

* Editor's Note: Later to become the first post World War II Chief of the German Air Force.

The decree issued by the Reichs Minister of Defense on 21 March 1933⁵ established the following principles of organization and contemplated responsibilities of the Air Defense Office:

1. The Chief of the Air Defense Office will report directly to the Reichs Minister of Defense.
2. The Air Defense Office will have authority to deal with those aspects of its own subject matter field which pertain also to the Army and Navy.
3. In relation to the flying forces and air defense units, as well as to the air weather service units associated with them, the Air Defense Office will have the status of an Ordnance Inspectorate.
4. The Chief and Chief of Staff of the Air Defense Office will be selected from different branches of the Armed Forces if at all possible.
5. Responsibilities
 - a. air strategy
 - b. organization and preparation for Case A (i. e. mobilization) in compliance with instructions issued by the Army and Navy High Commands
 - c. training in the use of air force ordnance materiel
 - d. development of aircraft and aircraft equipment
 - e. dissemination of instructions pertaining to the development of all equipment and munitions to the appropriate agencies within the Army and Navy High Commands (all requirements of a tactical nature will be submitted for prior approval by the latter agencies before dissemination)

f. administration of air weather service units (with the exception of those units specifically assigned to the Army or Navy)

g. all aspects of national defense having to do with aviation and air-raid defense and outside the province of the Armed Forces, these matters to be handled jointly by the Air Defense Office and the Army and Navy High Commands

h. budgetary planning

This early attempt to attain some degree of uniformity in the handling of matters pertaining to the air forces shows clearly that one of the most important problems of all, exercise of the command function over the new force, had not yet been settled. From the fact that the Chief of the Air Defense Office was not to be a commander in chief, but rather an Inspector of the flying forces, it seems obvious that a direct subordination of air force units to the Reichs Ministry of Defense was not contemplated. On the other hand, the many qualifications and reservations in favor of Army and Navy control would seem to support the assumption that the air force units were to be placed under these two branches in case of war. Built on compromises, the Air Defense Office could not expect to have any enduring influence, and when the Reichs Air Ministry was established on 10 May 1933, the Air Defense Office was disbanded as an independent office and incorporated into the Ministry.

The Air Command Office of the Reichs Air Ministry

The Air Defense Office, taken over into the Reichs Air Ministry under the new title Air Command Office, was organized into the following subdivisions: Air Force Operations Branch (strategy and commitment of forces); Air Force Organization Branch; Air Force Training Branch; Air Defense Branch; Personnel Branch; Miscellaneous Branch (general aspects of troop administration).

The section dealing with technological matters within the Air

Defense Office, Branch L-2, was divided; the Supply Group and the Inspectorate for Aircraft Equipment being incorporated into the Miscellaneous Branch of the Air Command Office, and the remainder of the section being made a part of the Miscellaneous Office of the Reichs Air Ministry.

From the standpoint of its responsibilities, the Air Command Office was clearly the forerunner of the future Luftwaffe General Staff.

The following months were devoted to necessary groundwork and to the problem of developing the best possible organizational plan for the new Reichs Air Ministry.*

The Chain of Command within the Reichs Air Ministry

Upon its establishment, the Reichs Air Ministry was placed under the Reichs Minister of War and Commander in Chief of the entire Armed Forces. This chain of command was made applicable to all questions of the national defense except for those aspects of defense which clearly fell within the purview of the Minister of Aviation in his capacity as a member of the Cabinet. Naturally, it was not always possible to draw a clear line between these two spheres of responsibility, and in doubtful cases Goering was not above using the authority inherent in his political power to effect an arbitrary decision.

Goering, whose other political functions occupied the majority of his time, named the newly appointed State Secretary of Aviation, Erhard Milch, as his permanent deputy. Prior to his appointment, Milch had been a director of Lufthansa.

In every respect, then, all the offices of the Reichs Air Ministry--including the Air Command Office--were under the authority of the State Secretary in his capacity as permanent deputy to the

* See Figure 1.

THE REICHS AIR MINISTRY

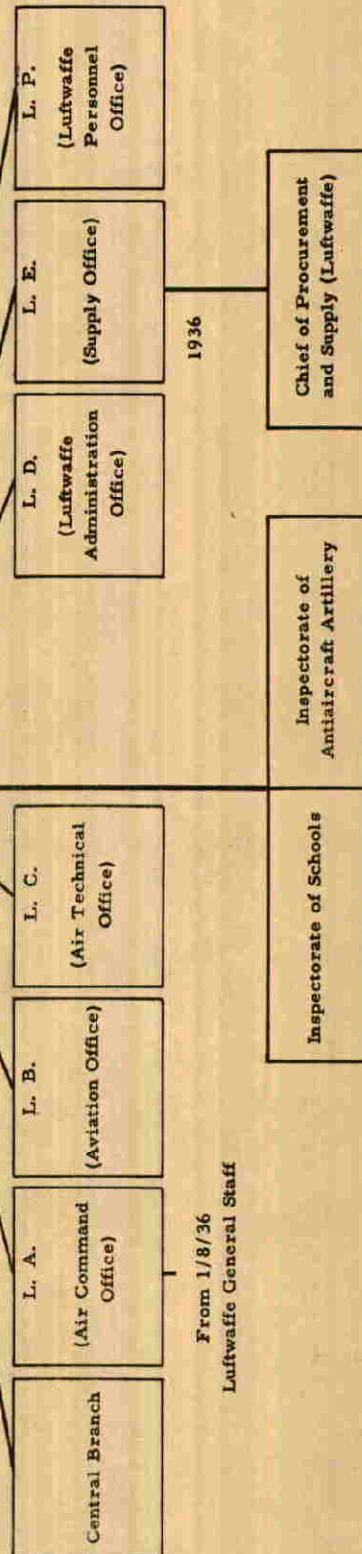
1933 - 1937

Reichs Minister of Aviation *

Hermann Goering

State Secretary of Aviation

Erhard Milch



* In 1935 the Reichs Minister of Aviation became, in addition, Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe.

Figure 1

Minister.

The service regulations issued for the Reichs Air Ministry provided that the Air Command Office was to issue orders concerning command function, organization, training, and armament equipment to all offices of the Ministry and to the Inspectorates at the behest of the Reichs Minister of Aviation or the State Secretary, as the appointed representative of the latter.

Although the service regulation did not specifically grant superior command authority to the Air Command Office (to all intents and purposes, the General Staff), by inference it enjoyed considerable authority within the Ministry from the very beginning, and was able to exert a great deal of influence on the expansion of the Luftwaffe. Field Marshal Kesselring, as one of the chiefs of the Air Command Office, has the following to say:⁶

At the direction of the Reichs Minister of Defense, the Air Command Office--or Luftwaffe General Staff--was made a part of the Air Ministry. From the very beginning it was recognized as a prince among peers, and its position as a Ministry office permitted it to exercise a decisive influence on the entire field of aviation and on the function of command over the air force troops.*

The organization of the General Staff itself was modelled closely on that of the Army General Staff. The Luftwaffe General Staff was made up of the following: an operations branch; an organization branch; a training branch; a branch for the study of foreign air forces; a quartermaster general branch.

There was no branch to correspond to the Army General Staff's Rail Transportation Branch. Instead, the Aviation Office of the Ministry, which concerned itself with questions

* Underlined by the author. Command authority could be exercised only in the Minister's name.

of civil aviation, assumed responsibility for air transport matters, working closely with all other branches and offices, particularly the operations branch and the Technical Office. This was an ideal solution.

In contrast to the Army, the Luftwaffe Inspectorates (bomber forces, reconnaissance forces, fighter forces, sea-plane forces, service schools, signal communications service, motor vehicle transport, and medical service) were directly subordinate to the Chief of the General Staff. In the beginning especially, this was an undeniable advantage, since channels were as short as they could possibly be. And this was important, for the effectiveness of Luftwaffe organization could be measured only by the ease with which technological developments could be assessed and their correlation to strategy determined. The system was workable, because General Staff service with the Luftwaffe required other, in part less time-consuming, activity than Army General Staff service. The Technical Office, on the other hand, was not officially a part of the Luftwaffe General Staff; however, its offices were in the same building as the latter, and the cooperation between the two was far closer than was the case with the Army General Staff and the Defense Office and Ordnance Office. The fact that their operations were so closely coordinated that the two offices were almost one was a vital factor in the creation from nothing, of an effective Luftwaffe. Since the entire organization was so small, its members knew each other better.

Thus, the Field Marshal, who--as Chief of the Luftwaffe Administration Office and, later of the General Staff--witnessed developments from their inception.

The Missions of the Air Command Office

The missions of the Air Command Office, as an unofficial Luftwaffe General Staff, were determined by the objectives

established by the new government and by the plans of the Minister.

Hitler had already outlined the government's over-all objective with unequivocal clarity. Bridging the gap created by fifteen years of inactivity, Germany was to include in her new Armed Forces establishment an air force comparable in every respect to the other two branches of the Armed Forces.

Goering was determined to create the best and largest air force in the world in the shortest possible time. As a deadline for the attainment of this goal, which was to be achieved in several phases, he set 1943.

Accordingly, it was the mission of the Air Command Office to create the premises necessary for attainment of the stated objective. Of primary importance initially were all aspects of troop organization and the structure of the troop command apparatus. Correlated to the above was the urgent need to develop training regulations for use in the flight training and other service schools, then in process of organization, and in the newly activated troop units.

Another extremely important aspect--although not the most urgent in point of time--was the establishment of operational instructions for the employment of the new air units in national defense, insofar as such employment fell within the framework of joint Armed Forces undertakings. This included the organization of supply services, motor vehicle transport, medical services, signal communications systems, and the air weather service, as well as the tentative formulation of technological requirements and the estimation of armament needs.

In the accomplishment of these missions, the Air Command Office was authorized and, in fact, obliged, to issue orders to all the offices of the Reichs Air Ministry, insofar as their cooperation was necessary to assure attainment of the over-all objective.

That this objective, which, although clearly defined, was somewhat difficult to envision practically in the beginning, could be

developed into a firmly conceived work schedule with clear and realistic target dates was due largely to the work of one man, General Wever, first Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff.

There was one factor, a decisive one in the rapid establishment and expansion of the Luftwaffe, which facilitated the work of the Air Command Office. One of the officers⁷ who participated in the early developments as a technical aide in the Organization Branch has the following to say:

The factor was the status of the General Staff as a Ministry agency responsible at the same time for planning and for the execution of its plans. For example, a member of the Organization Branch could set up a plan for the activation of certain new units, present it to the Chief of the General Staff for approval, and then prepare the necessary instructions to subordinate headquarters for accomplishment of his plan. A simple, clearly defined channel!

The situation was quite different in the Army, whose General Staff was charged with the planning function only. In the Army, after a plan had been approved by the Chief of the General Staff, it was transmitted to the General Army Office for action. The latter office, frequently after time-consuming conferences and consultations, then issued orders through the Army General Staff to the headquarters concerned for execution of the plan. Very often, however, the original plan was modified, changed completely, or abandoned altogether--sometimes as the result of petty rivalry.

The further missions of the General Staff, as well as that body's concept of the conduct of air warfare, will be discussed in detail in later sections.

Section III: The Reichs Minister of Aviation and Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe

Prior to 1935, of course, all the steps taken towards the

establishment of a new air force had to be carried out more or less secretly. On 26 February 1935, Hitler issued a decree which established the Luftwaffe as a third, independent branch of the Armed Forces, its new status to become effective on 1 March 1935. This decree confirmed officially the double status of the Reichs Minister of Aviation as concurrent Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe. In the latter capacity he remained subordinate to the Reichs Minister of War, who was Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, but his status was equal to that of the Commanders in Chief, Army and Navy.

The decree caused no changes in the organizational structure of the Reichs Air Ministry or in the missions of the Air Command Office. The office of the Reichs Minister of Aviation, however, was redesignated as the Office of the Reichs Minister of Aviation and Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe.

Its functions remained substantially the same, i. e. it continued to handle the missions assigned to the Minister and the Commander in Chief. The State Secretary, of course, was now officially the deputy of both the Minister and the Commander in Chief.

Section IV. The Luftwaffe General Staff (as of 1 August 1936)

As I have already pointed out in Chapter 2, by the fall of 1935 the strongly-felt need to give the Air Command Office a more clearly defined position within the Armed Forces command organization, a position more in keeping with the nature of its missions and with its status as a Ministry agency, had led to various considerations regarding the form and structure of a possible Luftwaffe General Staff. It was not until the early summer of 1936, though, that these considerations were given more substantial form, and not until 1 August 1936 that Goering ordered the preparation of a General Staff personnel roster. When General Wever, first Chief of the Air Command Office, met his death on 3 June 1936, his successor, General Kesselring, was officially appointed Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff.

Despite the change in its chief's title, the organizational

structure, title, and responsibilities of the Air Command Office remained the same--apart from a certain expansion of responsibilities occasioned by the growth of the Luftwaffe. Its new status as the General Staff of the Luftwaffe was apparent in the beginning only in the distinctive uniforms worn by its members and in the special classification of its officers. Since most of the positions within the Air Command Office were held by General Staff officers and since the chief bore the title "Chief of the General Staff," the desired psychological effect was attained in the form of increased authority for the Air Command Office in the eyes of the troop units, the other Armed Forces branches, and the other sections of the Reichs Air Ministry. On the other hand, its new status proved to be the cause of much dissension between Milch, the State Secretary, and the Chief of the General Staff. The disagreement between the two men reached such proportions that Kesselring resigned on 31 May 1937 and was replaced by General Stumpff, former Chief of the Luftwaffe Personnel Office.

Section V: The Reorganization of the Office of the Reichs Minister of Aviation and Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe in 1937⁸

In an attempt to resolve the difficulties existing between the State Secretary and the Chief of the General Staff, a reorganization of the Ministry and a modification in the chain of command were ordered at the time General Stumpff was appointed. The order⁹ redesignated those departments directly subordinate to the Chief of the General Staff as "Luftwaffe General Staff," and equated the status of the Chief of the General Staff to that of the State Secretary in every respect.

As a result of this reorganization, the following two bodies came under the direct supervision of the Reichs Minister of Aviation and Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe:

1. Chief of the General Staff: Luftwaffe General Staff (consisting of Branches I, II, III, V, and VII); seven Inspectorates; the

ORGANIZATION OF THE REICHS MINISTER OF AVIATION AND COMMANDER IN CHIEF, LUFTWAFFE

2 June 1937

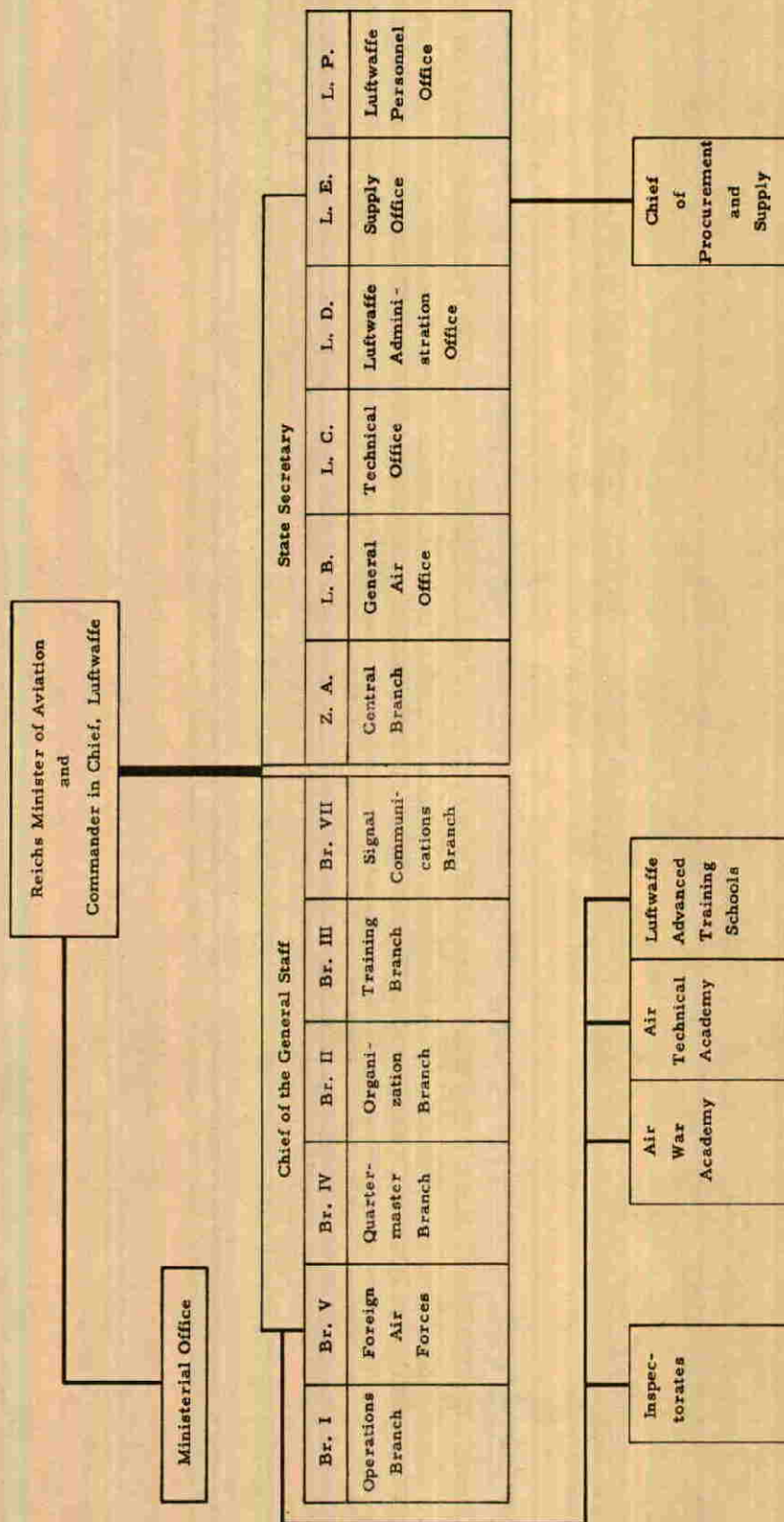


Figure 2

Air War Academy; the Air Technical Academy; the Luftwaffe Advanced School.

2. State Secretary of Aviation with the following offices: General Air Office (LB); Technical Office (LC); Luftwaffe Administration Office (LD); Supply Office (LE); Luftwaffe Personnel Office (LP); Central Branch (ZA); Inspectorate for Antiaircraft Artillery and Air Defense; Inspectorate of Schools; Inspectorate for Air Safety and Equipment.

The General Staff retained the authority to issue orders in the name of the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, to the other sections of the Reichs Air Ministry and to troop headquarters concerning all questions of national defense (mobilization), operational instructions, organization, training, armament, and supply. In all of these matters, the Chief of the General Staff was to report directly to the Commander in Chief and was required only to keep the State Secretary informed.

As deputy to the Reichs Minister of Aviation, the State Secretary was in charge of the other offices of the Ministry. In matters of policy, if his views should differ from those of the Chief of the General Staff, the State Secretary had the right to present his opinion to the Commander in Chief for final decision.

The new chain of command greatly curtailed the power formerly enjoyed by the State Secretary, and--since Milch was unable to resign himself to render the fair cooperation necessary to the good of the cause*--from the very beginning there were unpleasant disagreements regarding the limitations of individual authority. This friction was not only nerve-racking and time-consuming but also represented a serious threat to the harmonious development of the new service. General Stumpff's attempts to smooth things over with tact and friendliness were doomed to failure by the offended pride of the State

* For further details of the problems created by the Milch/Chief, General Staff relationship, see also Erhard Milch, ein Versuch (Erhard Milch, an Essay), by Richard Suchenwirth; Karlsruhe Document Collection.

Secretary, whose desire for power had been thwarted and who stubbornly refused to give up his fight to regain the position of sole commander within the Reichs Air Ministry.

In order to facilitate his own mission, the Chief of the General Staff introduced a simplified and clearer organizational structure for his staff on 1 October 1937. The individual branches under his command were combined into integrated groups, as follows:* Chief of the General Staff, with Policy Section of the Luftwaffe General Staff; Luftwaffe Operations Staff, with Branch I (Operations) (Ia), Branch V (Intelligence) (Ic), Mapping Group; Organization Staff, with Branch II (Organization), Branch IV (Armament and Supply Planning); Training Staff, with Branch III (Training). In addition Branch VII (Signal Communications); seven Inspectorates; Air War Academy; Air Technical Academy; Luftwaffe Advanced Training School.

These regroupings, of course, had no effect on the offices under the direction of the State Secretary, but were intended merely to facilitate the work being done within the General Staff itself.

The rivalry between the State Secretary and the Chief of the General Staff continued unabated. Under the prevailing conditions, this unhealthy situation could have been ameliorated only if it had been possible to achieve the appointment of the Chief of the General Staff as the permanent representative of the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, a step which, objectively speaking, had much to recommend it. However, the political ties of the State Secretary, as well as certain other factors, made it inadvisable for the Commander in Chief to consider taking such a step. It is possible that Goering's subconscious distrust of the "red trousers"[†] may have played just as important a role here as the resistance of the State Secretary. For it must be remembered that the relationship between Goering and Milch was far from ideal. As far as Milch's political connections

* See Figure 3.

† Editor's Note: The reference is to officers of the General Staff whose trousers bore a distinctive, double crimson stripe.

REORGANIZATION OF THE LUFTWAFFE GENERAL STAFF

1 October 1937

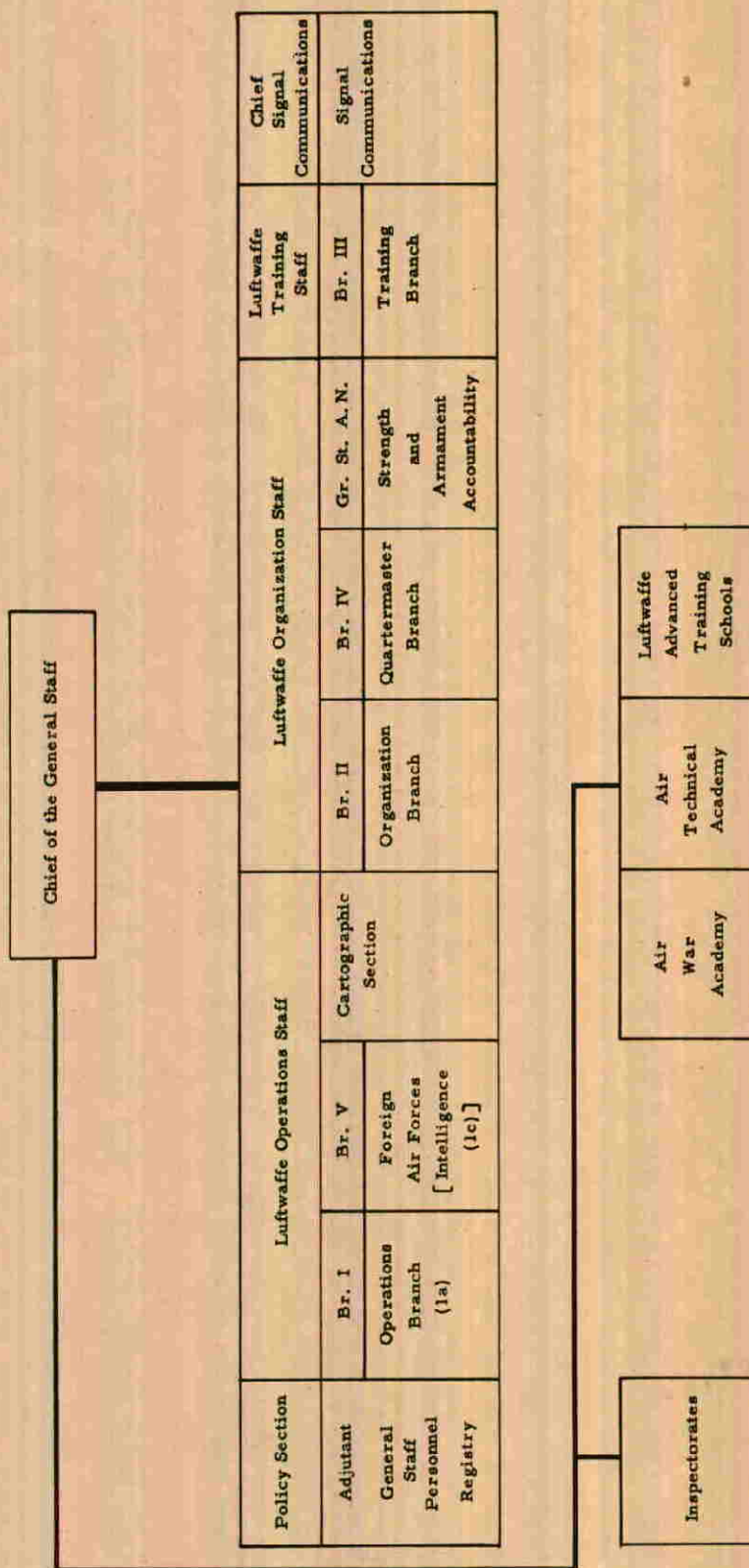


Figure 3

were concerned, he was much closer to Hitler and the Party than he was to Goering. Thus, even if Goering had wanted to get rid of him, it would have been extremely difficult to accomplish.

General der Flieger Paul Deichmann writes the following¹⁰ concerning the conditions obtaining at that time:

. . . During this critical period there were rumours in Goering's immediate circle to the effect that he would have liked very much to rid himself of his State Secretary, but that Milch had been shrewd enough to convince the Nazi Party that he was needed in his position as a counterbalance to Goering, whose unwarranted extravagances were beginning to make him unpopular.

Objectively considered, this round of the battle went to the Chief of the General Staff; the General Staff was declared no longer subordinate to the State Secretary, and the Chief was granted the right of direct access to the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe--with the reservation that he keep the State Secretary informed of the matters discussed and the decisions reached. The directive¹¹ of 2 June 1937 relieved the State Secretary of permanent duty as the deputy of the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, and instructed that he assume this responsibility only if the Commander in Chief should be away for a lengthy period of time or should be prevented by some unforeseen reason from continuing his work.

It was clear, however, that fruitful cooperation between General Kesselring, as Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff, and State Secretary Milch was impossible after all that had happened, and General Kesselring, at his own request, was relieved of the Chief's post and appointed Commanding General, IIIrd Air Administrative Area. On 1 June 1937, General der Flieger Stumpff was named as his successor.

In my capacity as Chief of Branch I, which at that time included the group responsible for establishing tactical technological requirements, I soon had the impression that, from

the date of Stumpff's appointment on, the technical sections (which were directly subordinate to the State Secretary, and not to the Chief of the General Staff) were actively resisting any attempt at cooperation with the General Staff.

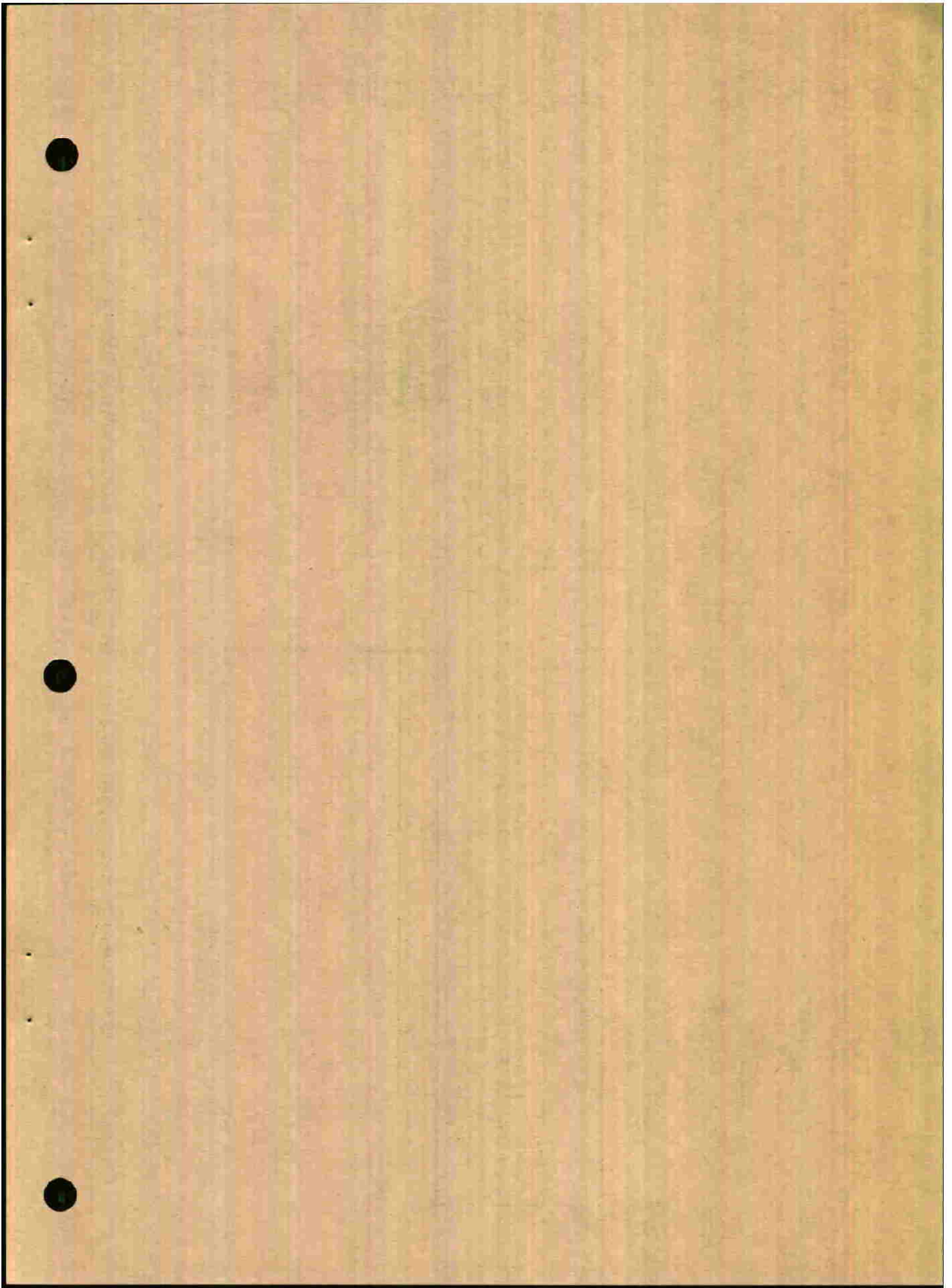
Inasmuch as the State Secretary and the offices under his direction were also responsible for many important missions closely allied with the military establishment (technological development, administration, building supervision, supply operations, personnel administration), it was obvious that the continual friction was bound to result in total paralysis of the command function sooner or later. The Chief of the General Staff was fully aware of the danger inherent in this situation. It was imperative that a mutually satisfactory solution be found at all costs before the disastrous effects of the split in command should become too deeply rooted to alter. And, since Goering was unwilling to take a firm stand on the side of his General Staff Chief, in late 1937 Stumpff took the initiative and came forward with the suggestion that he, as Chief of the General Staff, should once again place himself under the direction of the State Secretary as the sole representative of the Minister.

In this connection, Stumpff proposed a reorganization of the Reichs Air Ministry which became effective on 18 January 1938 and was to be accomplished by 1 April 1938.

Stumpff's proposed reorganization is yet another illustration of the continuing friction between the offices of the State Secretary and the Chief of the General Staff, a trend which was to exert a decisive influence on the final dissolution of the Luftwaffe command organization at the end of the war.

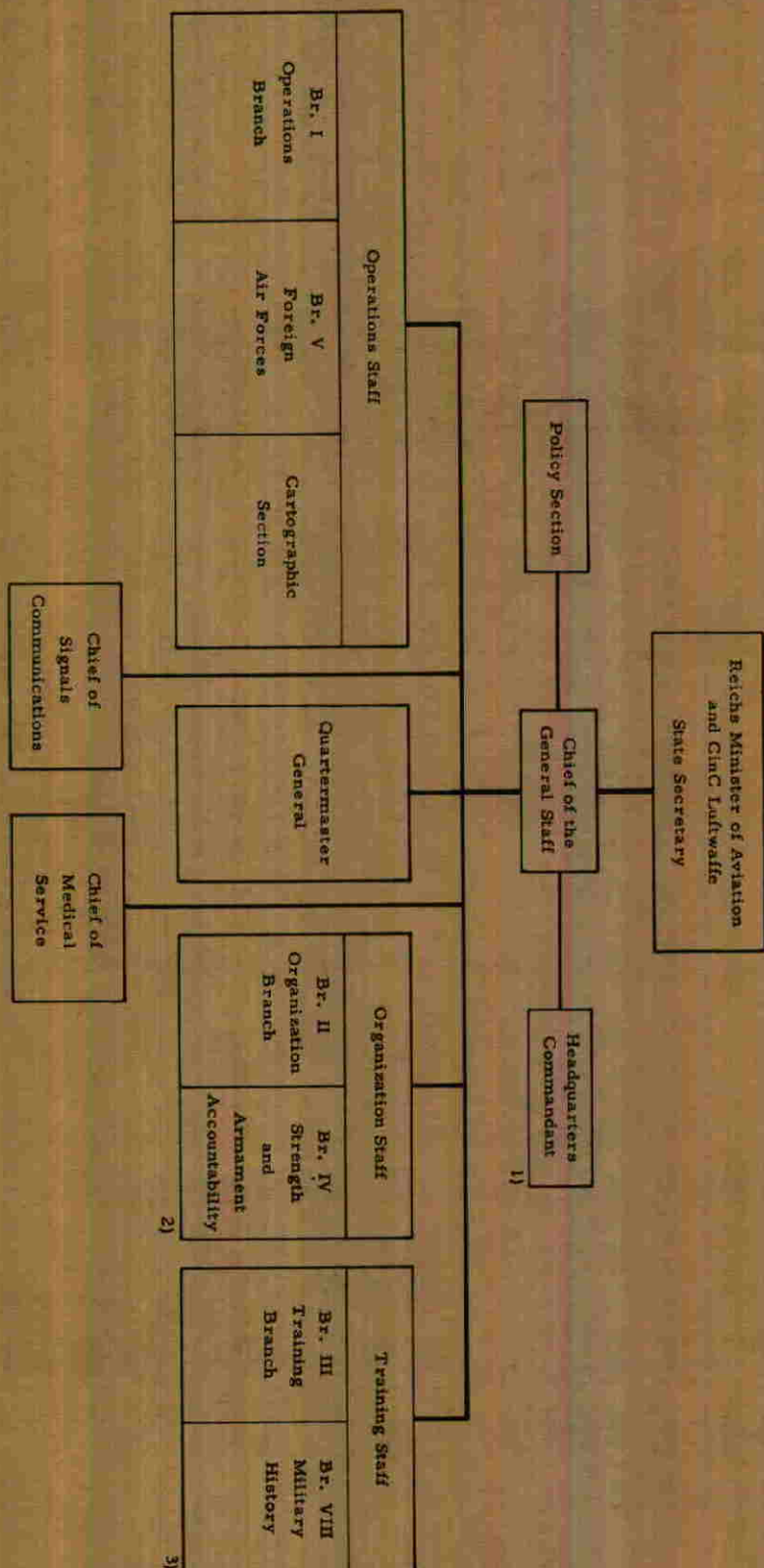
Section VI: The Reorganization of 18 January 1938

Stumpff's proposed reorganization formed the basis of a personal conference between Stumpff and Goering, which was to result in a decisive reorganization of the Reichs Air Ministry and a



ORGANIZATION OF THE LUFTWAFFE GENERAL STAFF

18 January 1938



1) Wartime only.

2) Became a Branch on 1/2/1938

3) Activated on 1/10/1938

Figure 4

fundamental revision of the responsibilities of its top officials.*

The reorganization directive, dated 18 January 1938, named the State Secretary as permanent representative of the Minister, and designated the Chief of the General Staff as his operational staff chief in connection with his duties as deputy. Thus, unity of command within the Reichs Air Ministry was restored, at least theoretically. Even the fact that the Chief of the General Staff now had the right to report directly to the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, in all questions concerning operational command and that he was still nominally directly subordinate to the latter changed nothing in the status of the General Staff as being subordinate to the State Secretary. In practice, the Chief of the General Staff still received his instructions from the State Secretary, and was responsible for keeping the latter informed of all policy matters.

The directive altered the status of the State Secretary as a department chief and combined several other functions into newly created offices, such as those of the Chief of Air Defense and Inspectorate General, Luftwaffe. These two posts, like the Chief, Technical Office and the Chief, Luftwaffe Personnel Office, were directly subordinate to Goering. Although the Office of the Chief of the General Staff occupied a very strong position as a result of the reorganization, in the last analysis the Chief's own position was still that of a prince among peers.

The reorganization directed by the order of 18 January 1938 had undeniable advantages over the former organizational structure. Based on compromise, however, it could not succeed in eliminating entirely all the sources of friction. Everything depended on the willingness of the other officials in the Reichs Air Ministry to recognize the Chief of the General Staff as a prince among peers, and on the attitude of the State Secretary towards the General Staff.

In view of the past differences of opinion between the State

* See Figure 4.

Secretary and the Chief of the General Staff, it seemed obvious that petty misunderstandings and minor disagreements would continue to interfere with the orderly transaction of business within the Ministry. This could have been avoided only by a change in the incumbency of one or the other of the two posts, and Goering was unwilling to order such a change. On the contrary, he seemed to feel that the continual rivalry between his two subordinates served to strengthen his own position.

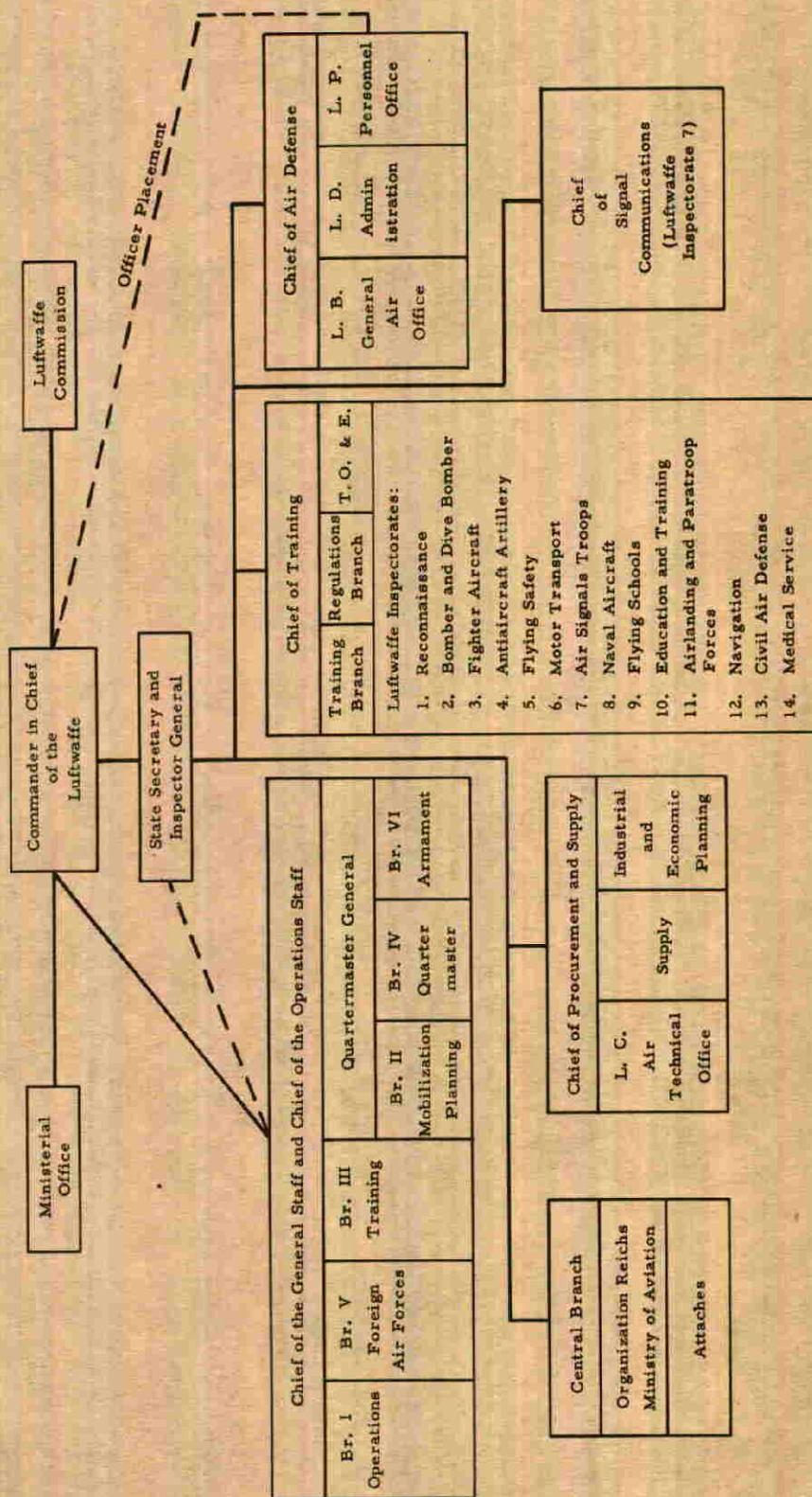
It soon became apparent, however, that the new reorganization could not possibly be maintained in case of war. It was felt that the top-level command organization of the Luftwaffe ought to be brought into at least approximate alignment with its counterparts in the other two Armed Forces branches. In case of war, these command organizations would hardly remain in Berlin; on the other hand, it would certainly not be feasible to move the entire Reichs Air Ministry from place to place. Accordingly, a way had to be found to separate the Luftwaffe military command apparatus from the rest of the Ministry without causing organizational chaos. Serious study was devoted to this problem during 1938, resulting in still another reorganization of the Ministry and revision of the duties of the Chief of the General Staff. This reorganization took effect at the time of Jeschonnek's appointment as Chief.

Section VII: The Reorganization of 1 February 1939

The reorganization of 1 February 1939* was based on a suggestion by Colonel Jeschonnek, Chief of the Luftwaffe Operations Staff and candidate for the post of Chief of the General Staff. The directive, based on his proposal, removed the General Staff from the organizational structure of the Reichs Air Ministry itself, so that it could be separated without difficulty in case of war. All those sections not directly concerned in the conduct of military operations were detached from the General Staff and placed under the newly

* See Figure 5.

THE REORGANIZATION OF 1 FEBRUARY 1939 *



* This organizational structure, with only minor changes, existed until 1944.

Figure 5

created Inspector General (i. e. the State Secretary).

The reduction in staff introduced by the new General Staff Chief did, indeed, facilitate effective supervision of the various elements under his direction; however, it also resulted in the loss of much of his direct influence over several important aspects of military planning. For example, the removal of the section responsible for signal communications operations from the General Staff proper was justifiable from this point of view only because its Chief, General Martini, was an officer who placed the good of the cause above his own person and continued to cooperate in the closest possible way with the General Staff.

In like manner the assignment of the Inspectorates to the Chief of Training--thus, indirectly, to the Inspector General (State Secretary)--undoubtedly facilitated the work of the Chief of the General Staff, but at the same time it precluded his exercising any direct influence on troop training and prevented any direct and immediate evaluation on the part of top-level command of the experience gathered at troop level. During the campaign in Poland it became obvious that this was a distinct disadvantage, and the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, ordered that the Inspectorates be placed under a separate General z. b. V. (special duty general officer), who had instructions to work closely with the General Staff. Later on, the most important Inspectorates and the Technical Service Generals which developed from them were again made directly subordinate to the Chief of the General Staff.

With its separation from the administrative organization of the Reichs Air Ministry, the General Staff once more took on the character of a personal operations staff for the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe. From this point on, the Chief of the General Staff was authorized to inform the State Secretary of matters pertaining to operations after, rather than before, his conferences with the Commander in Chief. In all other matters, however, he still had to report first to the State Secretary and Inspector General and obtain the decision of the latter as deputy of the Commander in Chief. This was a vague and illogical procedure, the success of which depended solely on the good will of

the parties concerned. The fact that this organizational structure was able to maintain itself until 1944, albeit with a great many minor modifications, was due chiefly to the war itself. Geographical separation helped to avoid most of the more serious conflicts; personal connections seemed less important; and the exigencies of war moulded the General Staff into an effective operations staff for the use of the Commander in Chief.

Section VIII: Wartime Top-Level Organization of the Luftwaffe General Staff, from 1939 until 1944

The organizational structure of the General Staff as of 1 February 1939 was also intended to be its wartime structure. Although it was modified somewhat by mobilization directives, it was not fundamentally altered by them.

As the threat of war became greater, the Luftwaffe General Staff transferred its headquarters to Wildpark-Werder (near Potsdam), which had been designated as the wartime headquarters of the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe. The rest of the Reichs Air Ministry remained in Berlin under the direction of the State Secretary and Inspector General. The geographical separation thus effected helped to reduce the otherwise unavoidable conflicts to a bearable minimum.

There were no further fundamental changes in the wartime organizational structure until 1944. The minor modifications accomplished within the General Staff prior to 1944 were as follows:

1940: Certain of the Inspectorates which had been placed under the direction of the Chief of Training were instructed to report directly to the Chief of the General Staff in matters of policy, keeping the Chief of Training fully informed. The Inspectorates affected were: 1, 2, 3, 8, 12.

During the summer of 1940, Luftwaffe Inspectorate 16, Inspectorate for the Air-Sea Rescue Service, was formed and placed under the command of the Quartermaster General, thus, indirectly,

under the Chief of the General Staff.

1941: The Luftwaffe Inspectorates 1, 2, and 3 were redesignated General of the Reconnaissance Forces, General of the Bomber Forces, and General of the Fighter Forces. All three were made directly subordinate to the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe (who, in the meantime, had become Reichsmarschall). This chain of command made them, technically and operationally, directly subordinate to the Chief of the General Staff. The urgent need, clearly recognized in the meantime, to make the tactical and technological experience gathered at troop level immediately available to top-level commanders served as motivation for this reorganization.

1942: Two new offices were created, a Special Commissioner for Torpedo Weapons and an Inspector for Aerial Mines, both of them under the direct supervision of the Chief of the General Staff. At the same time, the Luftwaffe Inspectorate 8, Inspectorate for the Naval Aircraft Forces, was disbanded. Its duties, insofar as they did not fall within the purview of the new offices, were assigned to the Luftwaffe General with the Navy High Command, or, rather, to the office under his direction, the Inspector, Navy.

Branch VII of the General Staff was formed by combining the Mapping Group, from Branch I, and the Aerial Photography Branch, from the office of the Chief of Training. The newly created Branch VII was placed under the command of the Chief of the Luftwaffe Operations Staff.

1943: During the early part of 1943, the Chief of the General Staff further facilitated his own mission by assigning greater independence to the Chief of the Luftwaffe Operations Staff and placed the following sections under the latter's direct command: Branch I, Operations; Branch V, Intelligence; Branch VII, Mapping and Aerial Photography; Chief, Signal Communications; Chief, Air Weather Service; Air Defense Planning Staff; Senior Commander, Troop Gas Defense.

The office of General of the Close-Support Forces was created and placed under the command of the Chief of the General Staff.

The Supply Office was abolished, to be replaced by the office of the Chief of Supply, which was made subordinate to the Quartermaster General, (i. e. to the Chief of the General Staff).

The Luftwaffe Inspectorate 6, (Motor Vehicles) and the Motor Vehicle Group of the Supply Office were combined into the office of the Chief of Motor Vehicle Transport, Luftwaffe under the command of the Quartermaster General.

In order to reduce superfluous courier traffic and to conserve aviation fuels in all branches of the Armed Forces, the office of the Chief of the Air Liaison Service was established and assigned to the Quartermaster General.

A number of other offices were set up during 1943 (which marked the beginning of the Allied large-scale air attacks) in order to speed the expansion of the Luftwaffe ground organization and to see that the technological prerequisites for increased commitment of Luftwaffe units in home air defense were fulfilled. These offices, which were also under the aegis of the Quartermaster General, were as follows: the office of the General for Air Traffic Control and the Ground Organization; the office of the General for Troop Technical Services, (made up of elements from the office of the Chief of Air Safety (Luftwaffe Inspectorate 5), and the office of the Chief of Luftwaffe Procurement and Supply); the office of the Chief Administrative Officer, Luftwaffe (by this time, the retreats in the east and south made it imperative that the General Staff have a section devoted to administrative matters).

The office of the General for Personnel Utilization, while remaining nominally subordinate to the Chief of Air Defense, was placed under the operational supervision of the Quartermaster General.

In May 1943, all the air transport units were combined under the newly created Headquarters, XIV Air Corps, which was later to become the office of the General of the Air Transport Forces. This General was directly subordinate to the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, although he received his instructions from the Quartermaster

General.

From the modifications in organization and chain of command described above, it is apparent that the wartime top-level organizational structure in effect at the beginning of the war was inadequate to the demands of effective military leadership. The overly simplified organization of the General Staff, with the resultant division of responsibility for important sectors of military activity, also proved to be unsatisfactory in the long run. Since the State Secretary possessed neither the ability to accept a subordinate role gracefully nor the necessary knowledge and understanding of military requirements, smooth cooperation was out of the question. The exigencies of war gradually led to the transfer of more and more responsibility from the State Secretary to the Chief of the General Staff, specifically to the Quartermaster General. As a result, the latter offices were overburdened with work and were unable to maintain effective supervision over the many activities in their charge. Inasmuch as the activation of new units and the redeployment of existing ones were usually not ordered until the military situation or a tactical error on someone's part forced the issue, they invariably came too late to improve the situation appreciably. A fundamental revision of the existing wartime top-level organization seemed urgently indicated, and in 1944 it took place.

Section IX: Wartime Top-Level Organization of the Luftwaffe High Command and the Reichs Ministry of Aviation, 1944

The early war years, especially 1943, had made it evident that a number of organizational changes in the offices of the State Secretary and the Chief of the General Staff were badly needed, and that the partial subordination of the General Staff Chief to the State Secretary was an unsatisfactory arrangement. Accordingly, during 1944 several basic organizational changes were undertaken in order to concentrate the function of operational command in the office of the Chief of the General Staff. The most significant of these was the abolishment of the office of State Secretary and Inspector General, Luftwaffe.

All those elements assigned to the Reichs Air Ministry and Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe which, prior to 1944, had been subordinate to the Chief of the General Staff or to the new office in charge of personnel utilization and supply planning were brought together as the Luftwaffe High Command.

The rest of the Ministry was placed under the Chief of Aviation, who now assumed the title Reichs Minister of Aviation. This office was filled by State Secretary Milch.

These three offices, Chief of the General Staff, Chief of Personnel Utilization and Supply Planning, and Chief of Aviation, were made directly responsible to the Reichsmarschall, and all three chiefs were accorded the status of deputy to the latter for their own particular areas of responsibility.

It is true that operational command was now primarily the province of the Chief of the General Staff; however, the former double channel of authority had now become a triple one, and it was not long before the new system also proved unsatisfactory. To what extent this may have been due to the personalities of the three incumbents need not interest us here. In any case, in December 1944 the post of Chief of Personnel Utilization and Supply Planning was abolished once more, and the elements belonging to it were reassigned as follows: The Luftwaffe Personnel Office was made directly responsible to the Reichsmarschall as were the Judge Advocate, Luftwaffe, the Luftwaffe Defense Office, and the Supply Planning Operations Staff. The Office of the General for Military Training was subordinated to the Chief of the General Staff.

Air armament was turned over in its entirety to the Reichs Minister of Armament and War Production, Albert Speer, at the time of the so-called tripartite organization in the summer of 1944, thus removing it from the jurisdiction of the State Secretary. The office of the Chief, Luftwaffe Procurement and Supply was disbanded and its staff (insofar as it did not move into Speer's office) was utilized to form the office of the Chief of Technical Air Armament, which was assigned to the Chief of the General Staff. This move finally gave the

General Staff Chief the influence he needed over technological development and armament planning; since he had little or no influence over Speer, however, there was little he could do to change the course of events as the war progressed.

The following offices still belonged within Milch's province as Chief of Aviation: Economics Office; Central Office Group; Luftwaffe Administration Office; General Air Office; Luftwaffe Inspectorate 13; Luftwaffe Inspectorate 17; Office of the General of the Luftwaffe Construction Forces, Office of the Chief of Luftwaffe Construction (Organization Todt).

It is clear that the State Secretary was left with nothing but administrative duties, while all his other responsibilities now were under either the direct or (through direct subordination to the Reichsmarschall) indirect influence of the Chief of the General Staff.

Other modifications carried out during 1944 were the following: the former office of the General for Air Traffic Control and the Ground Organization was divided into two parts, the Inspector of the Ground Organization and of Air Traffic Control, under the direction of the Chief of the General Staff, and the Luftwaffe Ground Organization Branch, subordinate to the Quartermaster General. The demands--created by increased air activity on the home front, and the introduction of new aircraft models, etc.--on the long-neglected ground organization within the Reich were the chief motivation for the reorganization mentioned above.

The Chief of Signal Communications, General Martini, received a new title, General of the Signal Forces, and his staff, which had grown steadily in size as a result of the increasing importance of radio communication, was further augmented by the staff of the former Luftwaffe Inspectorate for signal communications matters. Actually, the redesignation was intended merely to bring the organizational nomenclature into line with that of the other technical services generals. As a result, however, signal communications activity was now more firmly than ever under the control of a single person. The office remained, as before, under the command of the Chief of the General Staff.

The position Chief Engineer, Luftwaffe was created to replace the office of the General for Troop Technical Services; the new office being assigned responsibility for directing the operations of all Luftwaffe maintenance units through the Inspectorate of Air Technical Troop Services. The Chief of the General Staff had direct jurisdiction over the Chief Engineer.

The XIV Air Corps, headquarters for all air transport forces until 1944, was deactivated and its units placed under the command of the newly appointed General of the Air Transport Forces, who, in turn, was subordinate to the Quartermaster General.

During the course of the 1944 reorganizations, the post of General of Pilot Training was removed from the jurisdiction of the State Secretary and placed under the command of the Chief of the General Staff.

The activation of the Tenth Air Fleet at the end of 1944 brought other agencies concerned with personnel utilization and equipment planning under the influence of the Chief of the General Staff. Under the command of General von Seidel, formerly Quartermaster General, the Tenth Air Fleet was charged with the servicing and equipping of all training units, a responsibility which had previously been assigned to the Air Fleet Reich, but which the latter was no longer able to discharge inasmuch as it was fully occupied with the direction of air activity on the home front. The mission of the new Air Fleet was a difficult one because of the direct influence which the technical services generals could and--as the personnel shortage assumed ever more critical proportions--often did exert over the units comprising it. In an attempt to ameliorate the situation, the Tenth Air Fleet was redesignated Headquarters, Commander, Replacement Luftwaffe in the spring of 1945.

All of these reorganizations, deactivations, new establishments, and modifications in the chain of command which took place during 1944 were the result of the growing seriousness of the situation at the front and in the home area; all of them were dictated by sober military necessity. It was no longer possible to indulge personal vanity

or petty self-glorification. It was obvious that the situation called for the concentration of military authority in the hands of the chief military advisor of the Commander in Chief, the Chief of the General Staff. Goering made a tragic mistake in not recognizing in time that such concentration of authority was imperative to the effective conduct of an air war. All later attempts to remedy the situation came too late to do any good.

Section X: Organizational Changes during 1945

As Germany's military position became more and more precarious during the spring of 1945, Hitler and Goering ordered sweeping changes in the existing order in a last, desperate attempt to salvage the situation. One of their measures, which, incidentally, seriously jeopardized the smooth functioning of the Luftwaffe General Staff, was the appointment of special commissioners. Whenever catastrophe seemed imminent in any area, a commissioner was appointed, made personally responsible for seeing that his mission was accomplished, and--to this end--given all-encompassing authority which, by order of the Fuehrer, took priority over all existing requirements. The duties and responsibilities of the individual command agencies were brought into such confusion by the activity of these commissioners that their appointment resulted in a paralysis of the command apparatus rather than in a resuscitation of the war effort.

Among the commissioners whose activity interfered with the orderly functioning of the Luftwaffe command organization were the following: Commissioner in Charge of Defense against Four-Engine Bomber Units; General Commissioner in Charge of Jet Aircraft, directly responsible to the Reichsmarschall; General Commissioner in Charge of all Rocket Weapons, directly responsible to Hitler; Special Mission and Troop Recommendations Staff.

The special commissioners were granted unlimited authority so that they might have access to all available resources to accomplish their missions. In practice, however, the difficulties--bottle-necks, damaged transportation facilities, and chaos in the fields of war

production and military leadership--had become so nearly insurmountable that they were able to accomplish little or nothing. And their intervention in the established procedures of production and of leadership only served to hasten the collapse of the entire military apparatus.

At the beginning of the year, several changes took place within the Luftwaffe General Staff itself. Increasingly frequent shifts in personnel, made necessary by the deactivation of aircraft units, the establishment of new parachute and antiaircraft artillery units, and the continuing decrease in the production of weapons and aircraft, often required organizational changes in these sectors on short notice. Moreover, during 1945 top-level command arbitrarily ordered certain changes in plans which the General Staff had worked out to compensate for the acute shortage of materiel. The difficulties resulting from intervention of this sort finally became so detrimental to effective exercise of the command function that the Chief of the General Staff decided to establish a new Luftwaffe Organization Staff, to be composed of the following: Branch II, Organization, of the General Staff; Strength and Equipment Authorization Branch; Group II of Branch VI of the General Staff (which was redesignated Branch IX of the General Staff).

The concentration of all General Staff agencies having to do with organizational matters in a single staff was a move which was long overdue. It was accomplished too late, however, to bear any fruit prior to the end of the war.

At the beginning of 1945, Hitler ordered the consolidation of the entire civil air defense system with the Luftwaffe air defense units (including equipment supply depots, etc.) under the command of the Reichs Commander of the SS and Minister of the Interior. The former Air Defense Planning Staff was combined with Luftwaffe Inspectorate 13, Air Defense and, with a new title, Office of the Chief of Air Defense, placed under the command of the Luftwaffe Operations Staff. The latter instance is an excellent example of the practice of organizing an office around a personality, an office which frequently has no justifiable *raison d'etre* and no real authority.

In the spring of 1945 the post Chief of High Frequency Communication was created in the office of the General of the Signal Forces to take over the task of coordinating Luftwaffe requirements in the field of high frequency communication. At the same time the Chief of High Frequency Communication was in charge of developmental activity in this field on the staff of the Chief of Technical Air Armament and was a member of the General Staff in both capacities. The final course of the war has shown that, here too, recognition of the necessity of placing this extremely important aspect of modern warfare in the hands of a single individual under the control of the General Staff came too late.

At the request of the Armed Forces High Command, another change was made; General of the Air Transport Forces was redesignated Chief of Air Transport for the Armed Forces. His function as Inspector of the Air Transport Forces and his status as subordinate to the Quartermaster General, Luftwaffe remained unchanged. He acquired the additional duty of coordinating supply drop operations with the Quartermaster General, Army. This measure was necessary since the disruption of transport facilities had become so widespread by the spring of 1945 that it was impossible to keep the troops adequately supplied by normal means.

All of these various measures--and I have named only the most important ones, insofar as they affected the work of the Luftwaffe General Staff--were expressions of the desperately hopeless situation at the front and in Germany herself, a situation which could no longer be salvaged by the means normally available to a military command apparatus. In addition, however, they were evidence of the fact that top political leaders no longer had any confidence in their military leaders, least of all in the leaders of the Luftwaffe. On the other hand, it is clear that the chaos within the military apparatus was due chiefly to intervention on the part of political leaders--a fact which we may mention in passing.

When the Allied forces crossed the Rhine and moved on to join the Russian offensive against Germany's capital, new organizational measures became necessary to permit the command apparatus to

function effectively. As early as January, February, and March of 1945 all offices and branches belonging to the Luftwaffe High Command and the Reichs Ministry of Aviation had suffered a 50% cut in personnel strength, which was intended to make them more mobile. Although the Luftwaffe had hoped to maintain a single central headquarters until the end, this hope was soon dashed by the division of German-occupied territory into two spheres of military activity and the resultant geographical delineation of two major theaters of war. Apart from the newly accomplished reorganization within the Luftwaffe top-level command, additional modifications proved necessary to meet the changing military situation.

In line with the organizational policies followed by the Armed Forces High Command and the various Reichs ministries (i. e. separation into northern and southern headquarters) the following reorganization of the Luftwaffe command apparatus took effect in late March:

1. Most of the Luftwaffe High Command and the Reichs Ministry of Aviation were transferred with the Office of the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, into the southern military area, which was also the seat of the Armed Forces High Command, South.
2. A Luftwaffe Liaison Staff, North was created, made up of members of the Luftwaffe Operations Staff, placed under the command of the Chief of the latter staff, and assigned to the Armed Forces High Command, North. In the beginning, however, it remained operationally subordinate to the Luftwaffe High Command, a chain of command which could function smoothly only so long as the existing communications facilities were in order. Shortly before the end of the war the situation became so critical that there was only one radio channel in operation to connect north and south.

By war's end the Luftwaffe High Command was no more than a token command staff, composed of the following elements:

Chief of the General Staff with Chief of the Luftwaffe Operations Staff; Branch Ia; Pilot Operations (Ia); Antiaircraft Artillery Operations (Ia); Operations Staff, Weather Observation Station; Group I, Army

Liaison; Group I, Navy Liaison; Chief, Air Weather Service; Chief, Intelligence Branch.

Quartermaster General with Organization Staff, Branches II and IX; Branch IV; Branch VI; Luftwaffe Ground Organization Branch; Chief, Motor Vehicle Transport; Chief of Air Transport; Chief Administrative Officer, Luftwaffe.

General of the Signal Forces with Chief of Staff; Branches I through VI; Chief of High Frequency Communication; Chief of the Luftwaffe Personnel Office; Chief Judge Advocate, Luftwaffe.

By war's end, the total strength of the Luftwaffe High Command was only sixty-nine officers and forty-five other personnel.¹²

Chapter 5

OTHER AREAS OF GENERAL STAFF SERVICE

Apart from the General Staff posts within the Luftwaffe High Command and those positions on the troop operations staffs which were manned by General Staff officers, it was expedient and in the best interests of the Luftwaffe to assign General Staff officers to certain other important positions outside the service branch itself.

Section I: Fuehrer Headquarters

Peacetime organizational plans called for the assignment of one General Staff officer from each of the Armed Forces branches to the adjutant's office of the Fuehrer and Chancellor of the Reich. This General Staff officer had nothing whatsoever to do with the planning or conduct of military operations; his mission was purely that of an aide and liaison officer. This position, with its aide and liaison duties, was also retained during the war.

Otherwise, as was also the case with the other Armed Forces branches, the interests of the Luftwaffe were represented at Fuehrer Headquarters by the Commander in Chief himself. Normally, the Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff, the State Secretary, or the appropriate office chief from the Reichs Air Ministry, were also called upon to participate in conferences at the Fuehrer Headquarters.

During the war there were no deviations from this procedure. When the practice of daily situation conferences at the Fuehrer Headquarters was introduced, the Luftwaffe was represented either by the Commander in Chief himself or by his designated representative, usually the Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff. The longer the war continued, the more frequently it happened that some other older officer had to be designated to attend the conferences, because it was quite impossible for the Commander in Chief or the Chief of the General Staff to neglect his other, more important work for the several hours which the conferences invariably lasted. This practice

resulted in a rather undesirable situation, however, in that the officer designated to attend the conferences was inevitably forced into the position of being the one to receive top-level commands (although technically he did not have the authority to do so). In this way, of course, the Commander in Chief and his Chief of the General Staff were bound to lose a great deal of their direct influence on the top-level decisions made daily at the Fuehrer Headquarters.

As the war continued, and the Luftwaffe chalked up one defeat after another, Goering's attitude of noncommittal helplessness led to a sharp decrease in Hitler's confidence in him, and in 1944 Hitler demanded that a Luftwaffe general be assigned permanently to the Fuehrer Headquarters as Goering's representative. This general was to be one who had Hitler's full confidence and he was to be granted full command authority over the Luftwaffe.

Hitler appointed Generaloberst Robert Ritter von Greim to the newly created post. He felt that this officer was one of the most dependable and capable of the Luftwaffe commanders. Von Greim, incidentally, did not in any respect fulfill the General Staff prerequisites for assignment to such a position--he belonged to the category of reactivated officers. Thus he would, in any case, require the assistance of the Luftwaffe General Staff and its Chief to enable him to accomplish his mission. Hitler's hope of making himself independent of Goering and the Luftwaffe General Staff could not be realized by von Greim's appointment.

The inner conflict created by this assignment in Generaloberst von Greim, who was otherwise an excellent and highly capable officer, caused him--after a short trial period at the Fuehrer Headquarters--to request that he be relieved of his assignment and be returned to his old front-line position as commander in chief, Sixth Air Fleet. As the war neared its end, and Goering was relieved of his various offices, von Greim was officially appointed to the position which Hitler intended him to hold unofficially as Luftwaffe General, Fuehrer Headquarters; he became Goering's successor as Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe. He was unable to face the capitulation of the German Armed Forces to the Allies, and on 24 May 1945, took his own life.

After von Greim's resignation as Luftwaffe General, Fuehrer Headquarters, the interests of the Luftwaffe were represented until the end of the war either by the Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff or by the latter's appointed deputy.

Section II: Armed Forces High Command

The Armed Forces High Command has already been covered in detail in another section of this study. Suffice it to say in the present connection that the Armed Forces High Command--and the Operations Staff of that body--was far from that which the world (apart from Germany) imagined. This staff was not a General Staff in the traditional sense; it was not an instrument of command over the entire Armed Forces, but rather the personal staff--and a fairly small staff, at that--of the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. The command authority of the staff over the various Armed Forces branches was restricted to those orders and instructions which were issued in the name of the Fuehrer and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. In this light, it is clear that the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces High Command had no more authority than the chief of staff of a front-line unit--in other words, the command authority was vested in the commander in chief and not in the chief of staff. As a result, orders and instructions pertaining to basic policy had to be signed by Hitler himself in order to be recognized and accepted by the commanders in chief of the Armed Forces branches.*

The composition of the staff was in keeping with its limited missions. The most important positions on it were reserved for the Army as a matter of principle; the Chief of the Armed Forces High Command, the Chief of the Armed Forces Operations Staff, the latter's deputy, and the chiefs of most of the offices making up the High Command were members of the Army.

In 1939 a Luftwaffe Group was established in the Home Defense

* See below, pp. 133 ff.

Branch of the Armed Forces High Command to handle matters pertaining to the Luftwaffe. In keeping with its minor status, the Group was headed by a young General Staff officer, with one or two even younger General Staff officers to assist him. Since these officers were appointed and administered by the Luftwaffe Personnel Office and--as General Staff officers--received their instructions from the Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff, their position was rather a dubious one, and their dependence upon the Luftwaffe High Command was obvious. It would be equally inaccurate to speak of independence of any of the Armed Forces operations staffs, since the officers representing the other Armed Forces branches were in exactly the same position as their Luftwaffe colleagues. Thus the Armed Forces High Command was normally in a position to prepare and issue only such instructions as had been discussed and approved in advance by the High Commands of the various Armed Forces branches. Under these conditions, of course, the final result was usually based on the persistence of the individual partners, rather than on objective consideration of the best interests of the whole. The Luftwaffe General Staff officers assigned to the Armed Forces Operations Staff could never be more than liaison personnel at best; they certainly could not function as independent instruments of command authority for the Armed Forces.

In order that the interests of the Luftwaffe in the field of industrial procurement might be adequately represented in the Armed Forces High Command, one position as branch chief was reserved for a Luftwaffe General Staff officer. This position had been created chiefly for reasons of parity, however, and its incumbent had few, if any, opportunities to defend the interests of his service branch. Even so, this particular sector was one in which the Armed Forces was able to make its influence felt at least to a slight degree, despite the fact that the final decisions were ordinarily made by Hitler himself.

All the other positions on the Armed Forces High Command which--for reasons of parity--were reserved for officers from the Luftwaffe, were staffed by reserve or special duty officers. This was a result of the continuing lack of qualified General Staff officers. None of these officers, neither the ones from the Luftwaffe nor those

from the other Armed Forces branches, had been given any special or additional training to fit him for duty in the all-service Armed Forces command. We might point out, though, that the Luftwaffe officers were at least one step ahead of their Army and Navy comrades in that they had already had experience in some other service branch than their own (most of them having been recruited from the Army or Navy) and thus were better prepared to think in terms of the over-all service. This is a point, by the way, which applied to almost all of the Luftwaffe.

Section III: Army High Command

Peacetime planning did not include the assignment of a Luftwaffe General Staff officer to the Army High Command to act as advisor in matters pertaining to the Luftwaffe.

During wartime, however, certain Luftwaffe elements were detached to the Army, specifically air reconnaissance and antiaircraft artillery units, and wartime organizational plans called for a special operations staff to handle the employment of these units. The operational guide-lines for this staff, as well as the limitations of its authority, are given in the "Handbook of General Staff Service during Wartime."*

The chief of this operations staff was the Luftwaffe General with Commander in Chief, Army. This officer was personally subordinate to the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe; operationally, he was subordinate to the Commander in Chief, Army. He served as the latter's advisor in all matters pertaining to the Luftwaffe and as commander of all Luftwaffe units detached to the Army.

His status was that of a commanding general, and his staff--in keeping with the missions assigned to it--was, with a few minor

* An Army handbook, unofficially called the Roter Esel (Red Donkey).

deviations, like that of an air corps. Headed by a chief of staff, it carried out the usual General Staff functions. The General Staff officers assigned to this staff were selected primarily from the ranks of officers who had served previously in the Army and who had spent some time in an air reconnaissance unit.

The employment of the Luftwaffe units under the command of the Luftwaffe General with Commander in Chief, Army and the coordination of joint operations were covered thoroughly in detailed guidelines contained in the Handbook of General Staff Service in Wartime. These guidelines, in which the Luftwaffe High Command had concurred, were binding for the Luftwaffe General with Commander in Chief, Army and his subordinate headquarters. They could be rescinded only by the issuance of new instructions by the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, with the concurrence of the Army High Command.

The following agencies were subordinate to the Luftwaffe General with Commander in Chief, Army:

1. The Luftwaffe Commanders attached to the Army Groups (or Luftwaffe Commanders, Army Command Headquarters, as they were called if they were independent; the abbreviation used in both cases was Koluft).

Subordination and missions: Koluft posts were to be filled by General Staff officers. The Koluft acted as the advisor of the commander in chief in all questions pertaining to the employment of Luftwaffe units detached to an army group for a particular area of operations. As Koluft attached to an army group, he was also the commanding officer of all attached Luftwaffe units; otherwise, he had the status of a service chief over the units assigned to the army group.

In his capacity as branch chief on the staff of the army group or army, the Koluft was responsible to the Chief of the General Staff. It was his duty to present recommendations both concerning the assignment of the available Luftwaffe units to subordinate headquarters within the area of operations and concerning the employment of those

units specifically assigned to the army group or army.

The Koluft was responsible for keeping the headquarters command of the army group or army informed of the results of air reconnaissance operations at all times. He was also responsible for drafting the operational orders to be issued to subordinate flying forces and antiaircraft artillery units as well as to civilian air defense agencies within the area. In accordance with the operational planning of the commander in chief, he took the necessary action to expand and equip ground organization installations for the use of the Luftwaffe units assigned to the army group or army for operations within the area of command. In this connection he was responsible for maintaining the necessary liaison with the local Air Administrative Command Headquarters.

The Koluft was responsible for making recommendations regarding the planning and establishment of signal communications facilities to the signal officer of the army group or army, and for the integration of these facilities with those maintained by the Luftwaffe.

He was expected to maintain constant contact with the Luftwaffe headquarters in neighboring areas, to orient them regarding the air situation within his area, and to obtain information concerning their operational plans for transmittal to the command staff of the army group or army.

A Koluft attached to an army was responsible for coordinating the administration of supply activities for the Luftwaffe units located within the army's area of operations with the local Air Administrative Command Headquarters and with the quartermaster branch of the army command.

The delineation of authority between the Army and the Luftwaffe in operational areas in which both were active leaves no doubt as to the difficulty which must have attended the work of the Koluft and his staff of General Staff officers, and it would be pointless to deny that there were occasions when individual officers were simply inadequate to their missions. It would be equally pointless, however,

to reproach them for their failure, since it is clear that, without any special training and without peacetime experience in the accomplishment of these very specialized missions, they could not be otherwise than inadequate on occasion. Thanks to the excellent spirit of co-operation obtaining between the Koluft staffs and the staffs of the army headquarters to which they were attached, no serious mistakes were made.

2. Air Liaison Officers Attached to Army Headquarters.

Air Liaison Officers and Antiaircraft Artillery Liaison Officers were ordinarily assigned to the command headquarters of an army corps.

These officers were appointed by the Koluft attached to the army element concerned, and were usually selected from the reconnaissance and antiaircraft artillery units assigned to the operations area under the jurisdiction of the corps.

The liaison officers' function was advisory only; they had no command authority over the troops assigned to their areas.

As a rule, these officers carried out liaison activity with their superior headquarters (i. e. the Koluft) and with the Luftwaffe units assigned within the area by means of signal communications facilities provided by the Army. They also had at their disposal a small Luftwaffe signal communications element which was responsible for establishing radio communication with these agencies in case of emergency.

According to applicable strength authorization schedules, the liaison officer posts were not necessarily reserved for General Staff officers. In the interests of completeness, I have included them here because they were, on occasion, held by General Staff officers, especially when it was a matter of a vitally important mission to be carried out by a particular corps.

Section IV: Navy High Command

Even during peacetime, there was a Luftwaffe General with Commander in Chief, Navy.

During peacetime his staff was very small; in wartime, in keeping with the increase in its activity, it was expanded somewhat. In organizational structure, it resembled the staff of the Luftwaffe General with Commander in Chief, Army. The status of the general himself was that of a commanding general.

The responsibilities and authority of this staff were also similar to those of the Luftwaffe staff attached to the Army High Command.

The Commander, Naval Air Forces East and West were subordinate to the Luftwaffe General with Commander in Chief, Navy.

The staff of a Commander, Naval Air Forces was similar to that of a division command headquarters; as was also the case with the latter staffs, the operations officer had the status of a chief of staff.

A commander, naval air forces had command over all the naval air units assigned to the area covered by his navy group command, with the exception of ship-based elements of the "ground organization." The latter were unconditionally subordinate to the captain of the ship on which they were based for the duration of their assignment.

In addition to his function as commanding officer, a commander, naval air forces also served as advisor to the commander in chief of his navy group command in all matters pertaining to the Luftwaffe.

The General Staff officers assigned to duty with the Navy were, without exception, selected from among those who had had Navy service prior to joining the Luftwaffe. This was probably the main reason for the excellent spirit of cooperation which characterized the joint operations of these two services.

Here, too, --as in all higher-level Luftwaffe staffs attached to the other service branches--General Staff officers were assigned to the key posts because it was felt that they would be better able to handle the missions involved, with the double subordination factor which made them so very difficult at times.

Section V: Air Attaches

The majority of the air attache posts with the diplomatic service of the Reich were also reserved for General Staff officers.

The air attache was subordinate to the military attache of the legation or embassy to which he was assigned, unless--as was sometimes the case--he himself was appointed military attache.

The air attache received his instructions from Branch V of the Luftwaffe General Staff, and this was also the office to which he submitted his reports, copies of which were forwarded through the military attache to the Foreign Branch of the Armed Forces High Command. This procedure assured a certain degree of uniformity in the reports submitted; it did not, of course, preclude that the military attache and the air attache might express differing opinions regarding the subject matter of the reports.

As a rule, older General Staff officers (usually general officers) were chosen to fill the air attache posts. Unfortunately it was not always possible to follow this policy, and the result--as the war continued--was sometimes detrimental to the receipt of complete and accurate information by the General Staff.

Section VI: Air War Academy

The Air War Academy, the primary training institution for future General Staff officers for the Luftwaffe, was headed by a pedagogically qualified General Staff officer, whose instructional staff was also made up of General Staff officers. The selection of

these officers was always a difficult matter in the Luftwaffe, since it was extremely hard to find officers who possessed the qualifications and natural inclination for instructional duties and who were, at the same time, experienced in practical General Staff work. Moreover, the entire field of air warfare was a fairly new one, which meant that there were no established procedures to follow. The difficulty was augmented by the fact that the instructional staff was constantly being faced with changes in the length of the courses and with modifications in their subject matter, based on the ever-growing body of practical experience being gathered in combat.

Chapter 6

THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS
OF THE LUFTWAFFE TROOP GENERAL STAFFSection I: Early Development

In conformance with the Army Troop General Staff, it was planned to establish a Luftwaffe Troop General Staff to serve the subordinate headquarters installations under the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe.

Inasmuch as these subordinate headquarters had not yet attained their final and definitive form in 1935-36, there was a good deal of improvisation necessary in the assignment of officers to the Troop General Staff posts. One important factor in this need for improvisation was the critical shortage of General Staff officers which we have already discussed in several connections.

In order that the reader may have a better understanding of the development of the Troop General Staff and its missions, a brief summary of the organizational development of the headquarters installations to be served by such a staff may be valuable.

Until 1938 the air administrative area commands--which existed under the camouflage designation of civil aviation offices prior to the official establishment of the Luftwaffe in 1935--were not only those agencies directly subordinate to the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, for execution of the command function, but were also the agencies to which authority over geographical districts had been delegated.

Each air administrative area command was composed of the following subordinate agencies: one senior flying officer (all flying units in the air administrative area--with the exception of flying training units--were under his command); several air administrative commands (they administered and supplied antiaircraft artillery

units and Luftwaffe ground installations within their respective areas); one senior signal officer; one air ordnance group; one air administrative area medical branch.

All agencies physically located within an air administrative area (troop units, schools, replacement units, etc.) were subordinate to an air administrative area commander in regard to policies and operations affecting the entire area, irrespective of any other chain of command. For example, an air administrative area commander had sole responsibility for disciplinary measures within his area.

The air administrative area commander was also the sole representative of Luftwaffe air sovereignty; in other words, he had supervisory authority over the commercial airfields and over all commercial air traffic within his area.

The geographical extent of each air administrative area was equal to that of several military areas, * its borders having been established to conform with those of the several military areas making up its overall area of responsibility.

The underlying purpose of this organizational structure was to provide a simple system of organization and subordination on a geographical basis so long as the development of the Luftwaffe--in respect to both personnel and materiel--had not yet reached a degree of stability sufficient to permit the definitive consolidation of individual units into larger organizational bodies. The system, of course, was primarily designed to meet the needs of peacetime operations, and its inflexibility--an inevitable result of the emphasis on territorial organization--made it unsuited to the conduct of an offensive, or mobile air war; it was, however, entirely adequate to the needs of a defensive air war under the conditions prevailing at that time.

* Editor's Note: In German, Wehrkreis. This was the basic military area of Germany, somewhat like the prewar U. S. Corps Area, although it had the additional functions of administering conscription and supplying replacements for specific divisions and corps whose home stations were within the Wehrkreis.

Apart from the duties inherent in operational command, an air administrative area command was also responsible for a great deal of administrative work and for certain other missions which were akin to those handled by an executive military agency rather than by a general staff. In a horizontal compilation of missions and areas of responsibility, the air administrative area commands were not unlike miniature ministries.

From the vantage point of the present, it is clear that the burden of executive work necessary for the establishment and development of the Luftwaffe was placed on the air administrative area commands, which were not at all adequately prepared to handle it.

In the beginning, then, there was no Troop General Staff in the sense of the one which was later to serve the air fleet headquarters; and the provisional status of the air administrative area commands precluded any definite planning in this direction. The only indication of the plans in preparation for a Troop General Staff was the fact that each air administrative area commander was assigned a general staff chief--without, however, any other General Staff officers to work with him. It was not until later, when the officer personnel situation had improved, that additional General Staff officers were assigned.

Even after the assignment of additional officers, these staffs could not yet be considered adequate, either in personnel strength or in vested authority, to assume responsibility for the conduct of operations in time of war. The urgent necessity--in case of war--of freeing the air administrative area commander and his chief of staff of responsibility for secondary administrative functions not directly connected with the conduct of operations could have been met only by carrying out an organizational separation of the air administrative area command into two agencies--a kind of field command and a "home," or central command. On the other hand, this would have meant at least a short transitional period during which the Luftwaffe would not have been fully prepared for action; and it was clear that military exigency required that the Luftwaffe, like a fleet which is ready to set sail at a moment's notice, be prepared for action at all times without the need for basic organizational changes.

There were, however, certain advantages inherent in this organizational system during peacetime--a system which concentrated the control of many and varied functions within the hands of a few high-level command posts. Since the development of the Luftwaffe was in a state of flux, this system guaranteed a maximum degree of continuity in developmental trends and in basic organizational structure. In any case, during the early developmental period the critical lack of qualified officers (particularly General Staff officers, but also--to a lesser degree--technical experts, special duty officers, civilian officials, and engineer personnel) prohibited an assignment in depth of such personnel to the command headquarters subordinate to the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe; such assignment could take place only as the available qualified personnel in the above categories increased.

Section II: Reorganization of the Troop Staffs

During the period 1935-1937, individual General Staff officers were gradually assigned to the operations branches of the air administrative area commands as the work, and therefore the need for their services, increased. After 1938, when the offices of the senior flying officers were redesignated air divisions, these divisions, too, were authorized General Staff officers. In order to avoid any delay or difficulty in the smooth development of the Luftwaffe, no basic changes were made in the organization of the troop staffs during this period.

In April 1938, however, during the annexation of Austria, the system proved itself unwieldy, and the Luftwaffe General Staff ordered an immediate reorganization. This reorganization was designed to free the air administrative area commands from a number of purely administrative duties and convert them into primary links in the chain of operational command. Increased mobility was another goal, so that the air administrative area commands, in case of military necessity, could change their location without the need for an organizational split. To this end, the administration of all air defense agencies as well as the responsibility for the administration of the ground

organization, supply and procurement activity, and the supervision of commercial air traffic were transferred from the air administrative area commands to the next lowest echelon, the air administrative commands.

Accordingly, by order dated 1 July 1938, the existing air administrative commands were abolished, and replaced by air administrative commands covering a larger geographical area and vested with far greater administrative authority.

At the same time, the existing air administrative area commands were rechristened Luftwaffe group commands. In their new capacity as the operational command headquarters in case of war they were given full authority over all operational flying units (i. e. the newly designated Air Divisions), long-range reconnaissance units, the senior signal officer, and the newly created air administrative commands.

The air administrative commands were, in turn, responsible for the preparation and conduct of air defense operations (for this purpose they had exclusive authority over the anti-aircraft artillery and fighter aircraft forces stationed within their respective areas); and for the supplying of aircraft, weapons, motor vehicles, spare parts, ammunition, gasoline, etc. to all the flying units located within their respective areas.

In order to accomplish the missions detailed above, the following agencies were made unconditionally subordinate to the air administrative commands:

1. The airfield area commands, with their subordinate airfield commandants and advance airfield commands. Organizationally, this meant a separation of the group staff of the aircraft units concerned and the permanent airfield commandant. During peacetime, however, these two posts were filled by the same officer; full separation was not accomplished until wartime mobilization orders went into effect.

2. The air ordnance group, with its subordinate agencies (ordnance offices, ammunition depots, fuel storage points, etc.).

3. The signal communications and aircraft reporting service, (air administrative command), which was under the direction of a signal officer who was the advisor for signal communications matters on the staff and, at the same time, commanding officer of the signal branch, air administrative command.

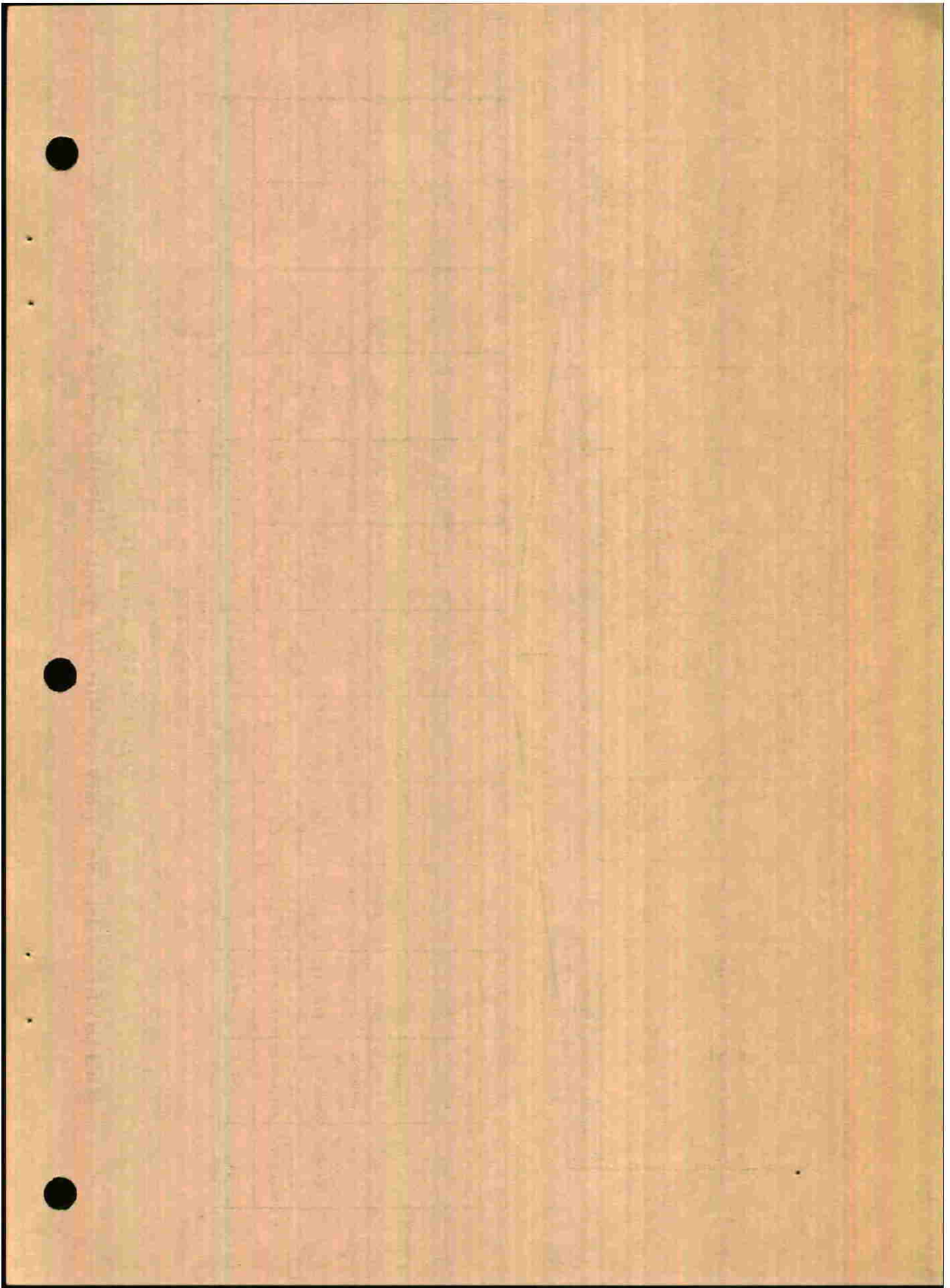
4. The medical services, under the direction of a medical officer, air administrative command, who was, at the same time, chief of the medical branch, air administrative command and in charge of all matters pertaining to medical services.

In addition, air administrative command had authority over all headquarters installations, units, schools, replacement forces, etc. located within its geographical borders. Moreover, it was charged with supervision of the commercial airfields and was authorized to issue orders to civilian air defense agencies. (At those airfields utilized by Luftwaffe units, the units themselves exercised the supervisory function over commercial air traffic.)

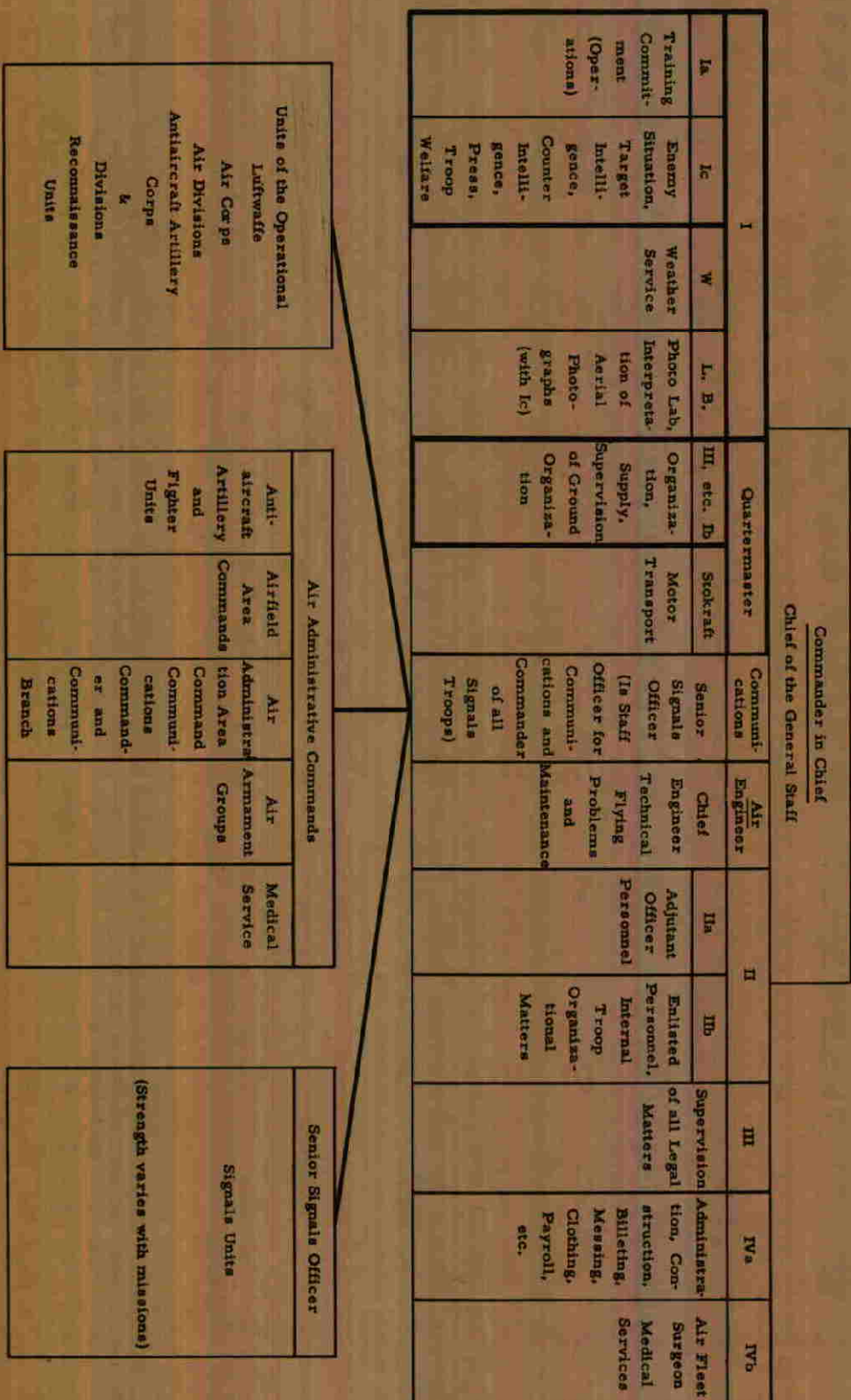
The commander of the air administrative command had disciplinary authority over all the units subordinate to him.

This organizational system was characterized by the clear intention of keeping the chain of command between staff and troops as short as possible. Thus, specialists serving on the staff were also in charge of the units and installations engaged in their own particular activity.

In keeping with their increased area of responsibility, the air administrative commands were theoretically authorized a chief of staff as well as sufficient General Staff officers to make up an operations branch. In practice, of course, only the largest and most important commands could be assigned the requisite number of General Staff officers in the beginning, while the rest had to be content with gradual assignments in keeping with the gradual increase



GENERAL STAFF ORGANIZATION WITHIN AN AIR FLEET HEADQUARTERS



Spaces surrounded by heavy lines indicate General Staff positions.

Figure 6

in the number of qualified officers available. The abilities of the particular commander were given careful consideration in determining the assignment of General Staff officers to his command. In this way an attempt was made to achieve some degree of uniformity in the overall performance of each command headquarters.

After this decisive reorganization had taken effect, the most important prerequisites for the conduct of effective mobile air warfare could be considered fulfilled. The reorganization had resulted in an adequate vertical system of command, an organizational separation of flying units and the ground organization at all echelons, and--parallel to the latter--a fairly complete separation of the agencies responsible for offensive air warfare from those charged with home air defense activity. The top-level command of both these activities still rested with the Luftwaffe group command; during the war, however, this situation was changed by the creation of the Air Fleet Reich to take over the home defense sector and all administrative duties pertaining to the home area, thus freeing the other air fleets for mobile operations.

In 1939 the Luftwaffe group commands were redesignated air fleet headquarters; however, no basic changes were made in organization or chain of command.*

Section III: The Troop General Staff

1. The Chief of the General Staff. The chief of an air fleet headquarters staff, and the chief of staff of headquarters on an equivalent level, bore the title "chief of the general staff." Apart from his capacity as chief of his own staff, a chief of the general staff was also the superior commander of all the General Staff officers filling positions within the geographical area covered by the air fleet. Command and disciplinary authority, however, were limited to the officers serving on his own staff. One of his missions was the

* For further details see Figure 6.

training and development of all the General Staff officers assigned to the air fleet area. He had considerable influence over the assignment of General Staff officers within his area, and was responsible for rating them--irrespective of their assignment or subordinate chain of command--in regard to their fitness for General Staff service. He also made recommendations concerning their further employment.

The chief of the general staff was the first and most influential advisor of his commander. The latter retained sole responsibility for command of the troops and the conduct of operations; the former merely served him as primary assistant and advisor, and was responsible for assuring that the staff functioned effectively and smoothly. Goerlitz compares this concept of General Staff service with the traditional one, as follows:¹

The principle of co-responsibility on the part of General Staff officers, which had been reintroduced by Beck, the champion of tradition, and the General Staff's right to direct access to the chief of state, traditional since Gneisenau's time, were abolished. Moltke's principle that officers of higher rank had the right to present and defend a dissenting opinion was no longer valid. The General Staff handbook issued in 1939 (the so-called Roter Esel) defined the role of the General Staff officer as that of an advisor, a staff assistant, and an executive and relieved him of any responsibility in questions of command. The commanding officer had sole responsibility in this regard. The handbook specifically stated that the Commander in Chief, Army, was to seek the advice of the Chief of the General Staff before making a decision pertaining to the conduct of operations, but that the latter must give him his whole-hearted cooperation in carrying out his instructions, even though he might disagree completely.

Although these principles were not specifically applicable to the Luftwaffe, they served as unwritten guidelines to General Staff service in that organization. It was not until 1944 that the manual "Instructions for the Luftwaffe Commander" was published; this

manual defined the role of the chief of the general staff of a higher-level command headquarters as follows:²

Each staff is headed by a chief of the general staff; in the case of division staffs, the chief is the operations officer. Under special circumstances, an operations officer may be officially accorded the status of a chief of staff.

The chief of the general staff is subject to the orders of his commander, and serves the latter as chief advisor in all matters pertaining to his area of responsibility.

A close and confident relationship between the commander and the chief of the general staff is an indispensable prerequisite for effective coordination and uniformity of command. Ideally, the personal qualities of these two men should complement each other in order to assure effective performance.

The achievement of uniformity of command depends largely upon the extent to which the commander and the chief of the general staff are in perfect agreement. Because such agreement is accepted as a valid premise, the chief of the general staff is authorized to issue orders in matters directly concerning his own work, and these orders are just as valid as if they had been issued by the commander himself. In the event that the chief of the general staff must assume responsibility for the command function, it is essential that he be familiar with the thinking of his commander. Likewise the commander must have the feeling that the action taken by the chief of the general staff is in essential conformity with his own views. There must be no grounds for an outsider to assume a dualism in command.

If the relationship between the commander and the chief of the general staff is not characterized by the desired closeness, then the association between the two should be discontinued in a matter-of-fact fashion and without rancor on either side. In the majority of cases, such separation is not based

on mistakes or errors in judgment, but rather on factors occasioned by differences in the personalities of the two individuals concerned.

The personal qualities and professional ability of the chief of the general staff must be such that he is able to achieve the acceptance and recognition due his position from his superiors and from the troop units.

The chief of the general staff is responsible for keeping his superiors informed in all matters properly of interest to them. Here he must be capable of distinguishing the essential from the trivial and the urgent from that which does not require immediate action.

It is his duty as well as his right to present his views in the form of recommendations to his superiors. His presentation must be clear, concise, and complete.

He bears the final responsibility for the suggestions and recommendations presented to his superiors by officers, technical personnel, and civilian officials under his command.

The decisions made by the commander are final, and it is the duty of the chief of the general staff as well as of every other officer to accord them his whole-hearted support.

In the event that the commander must be away from the chief of the general staff (or operations officer, as the case may be) for a short time, it is vitally important that he leave behind explicit directions regarding the issuance of orders and the maintenance of liaison during his absence.

In every facet of his work the chief of the general staff must show himself capable of meeting difficulties and surmounting obstacles by skillful improvisation and ingenious stop-gap measures.

The chief of the general staff, either personally or through

his chief assistant, is responsible for orienting signal and quartermaster personnel regarding operational planning, including the contemplated employment of troops. This must be done sufficiently in advance of the operation to permit them to take the necessary action, inasmuch as success in combat is dependent upon the availability of adequate communications facilities and smoothly functioning supply operations.

The chief of the general staff is responsible for assuring that the medical, troop welfare, and administrative agencies are adequately prepared for their roles in the contemplated operations.

The judge advocate and the court martial branch are responsible for keeping the chief of the general staff informed of important developments within their area of endeavor. Their experience and activity places them in an excellent position to provide the staff officers with valuable information concerning morale in the troop units.

The relationship between the chief of the general staff and the adjutant is also important. The closer it is, the more effective will be their cooperation in staff matters and in general personnel questions. Recommendations having to do with personnel administration should be jointly prepared and presented by the chief of the general staff and the adjutant.

The issuance of direct orders to troop elements is the prerogative of the commander, but may be accomplished by the chief of the general staff in the name of the commander. The chief of the general staff must always strive to maintain a correct and friendly relationship with troop commanders. Such a relationship can do much to facilitate the smooth conduct of operations.

The chief of the general staff is responsible for supervising the training and development of the General Staff officers on his staff as well as of other officers on his staff who

are candidates for General Staff appointment.

The chief of the general staff is in charge of the staff of his particular headquarters installation. In this capacity he is responsible for maintaining discipline and order within the staff.

Details of organizational structure, chain of command, and disciplinary authority are contained in the applicable strength authorization tables and service regulations.

The chief of the general staff is responsible to his commander for the smooth and effective accomplishment of the work assigned to his staff. Keeping the requirements of this work in mind, he is responsible for setting up the schedules for staff and front-line duty for the members of his staff.

The chief of the general staff, or a representative designated by him, is responsible for orienting the members of his staff regarding the military situation, insofar as such orientation does not entail violation of security regulations.

He is responsible for seeing that the necessary action is taken to assure that the personnel under his command are given adequate and uniform combat training, as well as any other training which he may consider necessary.

He is personally responsible for carrying out National Socialist indoctrination within his staff. It is his duty to maintain a spirit of comradeship among the members of his staff.

At all times and in every respect the chief of the general staff must display tact and good judgment in his dealings with higher-ranking officers and civilian officials on his staff. It is his responsibility to assure that the conduct, both on and off duty, of all members of his staff conforms to that which the troops expect of them.

The chief of the general staff must assure that all members

of his staff are regularly given the opportunity to visit troop units in order that their thinking may not become too far removed from the requirements of the front-line troops, and that their relationship to the troops may remain close enough to permit them to act intelligently and fairly in matters concerning the troops.

The prestige of the staff in the eyes of the troops will grow in direct proportion to the extent to which staff members are modest and unpretentious in such matters as billeting, mess facilities, and requests for leave.

The "Instructions for the Commander" quoted above provide clear and detailed guidelines regarding the duties and the status of the chief of the general staff of a higher command headquarters. These guidelines were also applicable to all subordinate Luftwaffe headquarters having a chief of the general staff.

The permanent representative of the chief of the general staff--irrespective of rank--was the chief of the operations branch. Under special circumstances, the commander or the chief of the general staff appointed some other officer to the post of deputy, but these cases were decided exceptions to the general rule, which traditionally accords priority to the operations sector within the work of the general staff.

The chief of the general staff had command over all members of his staff except those whose rank was higher than his own; the latter were personally subordinate to the commander.

Further exceptions to this chain of command were the administrative officer and the judge advocate and their respective staffs of civilian officials. These individuals were governed by special regulations and were directly subordinate to the commander.

Apart from the two last named, the chiefs of all branches and independent groups (irrespective of rank) received their instructions and orders from the chief of the general staff. The administrative

officer and judge advocate were responsible for keeping the chief of the general staff informed of current developments within their branches, and if he felt it to be necessary in any matter, he had the right to request a joint conference with the commander and the official concerned in order to present his views. Otherwise, the other two branches, particularly the office of the administrative officer, were instructed to work closely with the branches making up the general staff.

Each commander was allowed a certain amount of leeway in directing the coordination of the administrative office with the other branches. Based on the fact that the administrative office had a great deal to do with supply matters, for example, some commanders delegated their command authority over the administrative officer to the chief of the general staff or the quartermaster in order to assure the smooth functioning of supply operations. In the cases where this was done, it proved to be very effective, particularly in areas where the question of supply was inextricably bound to the transport problem. Thus both agencies became dependent upon the work of the transportation officer on the quartermaster's staff.

2. The Branches of the Troop General Staff. The following staff branches and groups operated in accordance with instructions and orders issued by the chief of the general staff. The order in which they are listed is the one which was followed in all higher-level command headquarters air fleets, corps, and air administrative commands: operations (Ia), intelligence (Ic), weather service, quartermaster, and signal communications.

With the exception of the weather service, all of these branches were normally headed by General Staff officers, while the subordinate positions were filled by officers not belonging to the General Staff. Here, too, the assignments were largely dependent upon and influenced by the continuing shortage of qualified General Staff officers.

Although they, too, were subordinate to the chief of the general staff, the other agencies making up the staff did not appear on the General Staff strength authorization, but were staffed by troop

officers, technical officers, civilian officials, or engineer personnel. They were not really general staff branches, since they had no direct part in the conduct of operations. However, inasmuch as the work of the headquarters staffs was an entity under the direction of the chief of the general staff, the other branches making up a staff were: the adjutant's office; the chief engineer (air administrative command engineer, corps engineer); the judge advocate; the administrative officer; the medical officer; the air control office; the headquarters commandant.

The organizational structure described above proved to be conducive to close and effective cooperation within the staffs. Only in exceptional cases, i. e. in the event of a special mission, was it necessary to introduce any changes in order to meet the needs of wartime operation.

The basic structure of the troop general staff was the same at all command headquarters. This was a great advantage in that it permitted a certain degree of uniformity in the issuance of orders and in military correspondence between the staffs themselves and from the staffs to their subordinate agencies. Among themselves the staffs differed only in significance and size, in that the assignment of a special mission made it necessary occasionally to increase or decrease the strength of a particular branch or group.

In the air fleet commands, for example, the operations and intelligence groups, which were quite large and worked closely together, were combined in Branch I - Operations. This emphasis on operations was quite natural in view of the fact that the missions entrusted to the air fleet commands were chiefly operational in nature.

In the air administrative commands, on the other hand, these groups were naturally smaller than their counterparts in the air fleet commands. The emphasis--at least the quantitative emphasis--lay on supply and administration. Accordingly, the quartermaster branch and the office of the administrative officer had more personnel than their counterparts in the air fleet commands.

The staffs of the parachute units and the Luftwaffe field units formed an exception to the organizational structure described above. These units were primarily concerned with ground combat operations; thus it is understandable that the organization of the staffs within the Parachute Corps and the Luftwaffe Field Corps and its divisions were modeled on their Army counterparts. Inasmuch as the Army troop staffs at each echelon had served as models for the organization of the Luftwaffe troop staffs in the first place, the differences were not great. Logically enough, the staffs of the parachute units were larger than those of the field units, inasmuch as the parachute units were concerned with flying missions as well as with ground combat. In order to handle this dual mission, their staffs had flying forces and an antiaircraft artillery forces group in their operations branch.

Those headquarters ranking below corps and air administrative command level did not maintain troop general staffs in the sense that we have discussed above. The staffs of the air divisions, antiaircraft artillery divisions, and other headquarters at comparable level were assigned one General Staff officer to serve as operations officer and, depending upon the importance of the unit's mission, one or two others (intelligence officer, quartermaster).

The senior General Staff officer of a division did not have the authority of a chief of staff, despite the fact that he was the first assistant and advisor of the commander. He did not have the authority to issue orders to other members of the staff; his status was rather that of a prince among peers. It was the responsibility of the division commander himself to direct the work of his staff. However, since the senior General Staff officer acted as the commander's deputy in the latter's absence, it was natural that he should gradually assume a status akin to that of a chief of staff--depending, of course, upon his own strength of personality. Inasmuch as it was standard practice within the German Armed Forces during the last war for the commander to remain with his troops in action, the position of the senior General Staff officer within the staff was usually very strong. For this reason the post of senior General Staff officer at divisional level was a very desirable one in the eyes of the younger officers.

Chapter 7

PROBLEMS FACED BY THE LUFTWAFFE GENERAL STAFF

Section I: Hitler and the Luftwaffe General Staff

Hitler's attitude towards the Luftwaffe General Staff was colored by the same factors which motivated his distrust of general staff service as such. His antipathy, which could develop into intense hatred on occasion, was largely due to the subconscious feeling of inferiority which characterized this man who had risen from the bottom, and who always wore the Iron Cross, First Class, awarded in World War I, as his only decoration--apart from his Party emblem--to convince himself and others that he was a military expert of the first water.

Even so, Hitler was too shrewd to neglect using the Reichswehr as the nucleus of the armed force he planned to create. This force was to be the primary instrument of his power politics and was to be groomed and trained for this role from its very inception.

Instinctively he felt that the General Staff, the intellectual elite of this instrument, represented the most serious threat to his plans. And the frank and open battle waged by Generaloberst Beck (the first chief of the Army General Staff) did nothing to dispel this feeling.

In order to clarify the reader's concept of Generaloberst Beck, I have quoted below several passages concerning him which appeared in an article on military policy:¹

. . . Professor Wolfgang Foerster, the last director of the Reichs Archives, has written a book on Beck which bears the title A General Fights Against the War.²

On 1 October 1933, Beck was made chief of the Troop Office in the Reichs Ministry of Defense; on 1 July 1935 his

title was changed to Chief of the Army General Staff. This position, however, was no longer so important as it had been in the days of Moltke, Schlieffen, and Hindenburg. Beck was essentially an "aide" to his superior, the Commander in Chief, Army (General von Brauchitsch, with whom he often disagreed, personally and professionally), and the change in title did nothing to alter his status.

In a speech commemorating the 125th anniversary of the War Academy on 15 October 1935, Beck reminds the future General Staff officers of von Clausewitz' words:

' . . . The higher we climb on the officer's career ladder, the more necessary it is that objective judgment come to the aid of personal courage, in order to assure that courage does not represent merely a futile and blind outburst of passion. For it is less and less a matter of individual, personal sacrifice; more and more the fate of others and the welfare of the entire whole that are inextricably bound to our actions. '

Foerster, who knew Beck personally, describes him as a ' . . . quiet, serious, thoughtful, responsible, and unselfish man. Despite his energy and ability, nothing could have been farther from his mind than the ambition to push the efficiency of his forces and his own capabilities into the limelight of history. ' One can hardly imagine a personality more divergent from Hitler's!

Beck's attitude towards the proper relationship between politics and war is sharply divergent from the views expressed by Ludendorff in his article The Doctrine of Total War, published after World War I. It was Ludendorff's belief that the traditional relationship between political action and war had changed materially, and that in the future war--and not political negotiations--should be given priority, even to the point of subordinating the chief of the political state to the military leader.

Beck repudiated this view. He summarized the

prerequisites for a morally sound political atmosphere as follows: 1) peaceful cooperation among nations in such matters as trade and commerce; 2) diplomatic goals objectively selected in keeping with the geopolitical situation of the nation concerned; 3) settlement of rivalries and conflicting spheres of power through the establishment of recognized spheres of interest and by strict adherence to treaties. He placed the use of armed forces, whose very existence sometimes make their employment seem inevitable, at the very end of the list.

In a critique dated 12 November 1937, Beck had the following to say of Hitler's plans for the future, revealed for the first time officially on 5 November 1937. ' . . . Politics is the art of exploiting the possible. All three nations--Germany, France, and England--happen to exist at the same time and in the same place, namely Europe. This means that we should exhaust every possibility of getting along together amicably--especially in view of our relative strengths. '

In the same connection, a memorandum prepared by the Chief of the General Staff on 5 May 1938 contains a decisive comment: ' . . . Germany's military and political situation simply does not offer the geographical conditions necessary to enable her to sustain a large-scale war on land, at sea, and in the air. World War I has shown us that reliance on the neutrality of other nations is a fallacy. Germany cannot sustain a long-term war, if only by reason of her geographical limitations! '

In three other memoranda issued by Beck during the period 29 May-16 July 1938, all of them warning against the danger of military involvement under conditions unfavorable to Germany, he concludes with the urgent request that ' . . . the Commander in Chief, Armed Forces be prevailed upon to desist from the preparations which he has been ordered to undertake for a war against Czechoslovakia. '

In addition to these memoranda, Beck also presented his views in countless personal conferences. For him it was a matter of ' . . . a decision which will determine, once and for all time, the continued existence of the nation.' He was unsuccessful in his efforts to persuade the top-level Armed Forces leaders to present their objections to Hitler in the form of an ultimatum.

On 27 August 1938, Beck turned the duties of the Chief of the General Staff over to his successor, General Halder, and on 31 October 1938, he retired from the service.

Apparently Hitler was not unaware of the attitude prevailing among his top-level military leaders--particularly those of the Army--, as his complaint indicates: ' . . . what sort of generals are these anyway, that I--as chief of state--have to drive them to war? If they were what they are supposed to be, I would be having a hard time fending off their demands for war!'

Let us point out here that the higher-level officers by no means stood by silently, as popular fancy has had it on occasion. As a matter of fact, thirty-two out of a total of fifty-four generals holding high command posts were dismissed by Hitler because they defended views differing from his own. The total losses in generals and admirals during the last war were made up of the following: 287 killed in action, 49 killed in accidents, and 108 who took their own lives (some of them, to be sure, after the war was over) rather than continue to ignore the dictates of conscience. During World War I sixty-three generals were killed in action. I do not bring this up to gloss over anything, but merely in order to clarify the extent to which the usual opinion in this case may be justified. I feel that it is necessary to examine these facts, since most of the higher-level officers were members of the General Staff Corps.

The following comments by Dr. Hans Frank,³ former Governor

General of Poland and a member of Hitler's intimate circle, may also serve to shed some light on Hitler's attitude towards the General Staff.

. . . It has amused me very much during the last few months to observe the deliberate attempts being made to convince the public that the Armed Forces High Command and the General Staff were bosom friends and that both were eager accomplices of Hitler; for if there was anything at all in German history towards which Hitler felt hostile, it was the General Staff. He used to say that the General Staff had long since ' . . . betrayed, forgotten, and abandoned Moltke and Schlieffen, ' and had become nothing but an ' . . . exclusive clique of particularly arrogant dunces and of national pests, characterized by barren sterility, a total lack of creative thinking, abject cowardice, and the empty conceit normally accompanying these qualities. '

Another time he expressed his contempt in the following words: ' . . . At times the gentlemen with the crimson stripe on their trousers disgust me more than the Jews. At least the latter admit frankly that they have no desire to be soldiers, whereas the General Staff people are obsessed with the idea that they--and they alone--are properly qualified for that activity. '

Hitler also originated the widely-cited statement, ' . . . The General Staff is the only Order of Free Masons which I've not yet abolished. '

So much for Frank's comments. There would seem to be no reason for us to doubt them, made as they were by an intimate of Hitler who was sentenced to death at Nuremberg. Hitler's remarks--as quoted here--were originally made in private and did not become public until after his death, at least not within the Luftwaffe General Staff. Examined in retrospect, they leave no doubt whatsoever as to Hitler's personal attitude towards the General Staff.

Although Hitler's distrust of the Army General Staff dated

from the very beginning, it was quite a while before the Luftwaffe General Staff became aware of any disparaging remarks directed against itself. Whereas the Army General Staff had to fight to maintain its position of leadership within the Armed Forces, and thus was bound to come into ideological conflict with the dictates of National Socialism and with its leader,⁴ the comparatively new Luftwaffe General Staff had neither the inclination nor the time to worry about such matters as prestige within the Armed Forces. While the leading personalities of the Army and its General Staff frequently gave public expression, by word and deed, to their mistrust of National Socialism, the top-ranking Luftwaffe officers were so fully occupied by their immediate missions that they had neither the time nor the interest for intervention in political matters. A certain feeling of gratitude that Hitler was making it possible for them to tackle a new and fascinating military project may also have played some part; the decisive factor, though, was probably Goering's ability to divert political criticism away from the General Staff and the officer corps of the Luftwaffe. In any case, the Luftwaffe was spared the almost daily friction faced by the Army and its General Staff, and the tension between Hitler and his Armed Forces leaders had far less effect on the Luftwaffe General Staff than on the Army.

This relationship between Hitler and the Luftwaffe General Staff, which we may term a neutral one, lasted through the early war years, possibly because Hitler's instinctive distrust of anyone wearing the General Staff uniform was lulled to passivity in regard to the Luftwaffe General Staff by the extraordinary success enjoyed by the Luftwaffe during this period. In any case, Hitler was definitely amenable to suggestions regarding air armament and the employment of the Luftwaffe forces until 1940. Thus, any mistakes made up to this point in armament planning, organization, or commitment of forces must be laid squarely on the shoulders of Goering and his General Staff chiefs.

Hitler's attitude, however, changed rapidly as soon as the Luftwaffe began to run into difficulty. That these difficulties were due in great part, first, to the fact that he had trusted Goering implicitly and had taken little personal interest in the affairs of the Luftwaffe,

and, second, to his own decisions in the field of armament planning for the Armed Forces, was something he refused to recognize. He simply placed the blame for everything on Goering and the Luftwaffe General Staff.

There is little point in our trying to absolve Goering and his General Staff Chief of all blame for the wrong decisions which were made--on the contrary, both were largely responsible for what happened, as we shall see later on. The decisive point, however, is the fact that in a dictatorship all decisions are ultimately taken by the head of state--either by direct order, by exploitation on the part of the dictator of the fear felt by subordinate agencies, or by the influence he wields over blindly trusting followers. The dictator's word is law; he is infallible, regardless of whether he belongs to the right or left wing. Ultimately a mass psychosis is created which threatens to paralyze the entire nation. It could never have occurred to Goering, as one of Hitler's first converts and as his helper during the early days of his struggle for power, to doubt the rightness of any of Hitler's opinions or decisions, even when Goering's own professional ability (which, to be sure, was not great) ought to have convinced him to the contrary. I know of no better illustration of the relationship between Hitler and Goering than the following scene, which I witnessed myself and have never forgotten:

During the summer of 1937 Hitler faced certain difficult political decisions. Accordingly he called upon the Commanders in Chief of the various Armed Forces branches (including Goering, of course) to brief him on the status of the armament program. With great enthusiasm Goering elaborated on the virtues of the various types of aircraft in use, stating that his bombers were capable of almost anything imaginable. Understandably Hitler was left with the impression that Germany's bomber fleet was unbeatable. There is no way of telling whether Goering deliberately set out to deceive Hitler or whether he was merely carried away by his own eloquence. In any case, Goering was clearly astonished when one of his officers drily pointed out that, at the moment, Germany did not possess a single up-to-date bomb. Hitler, who had let himself be fired by Goering's enthusiasm, was shocked. It was only with difficulty that

he was able to keep his temper.

After the conference was over, Goering turned on his officers with bitter reproaches. He brushed aside their argument that it was absolutely necessary to keep the chief of state accurately informed as to the actual strength or weakness of his armed forces.

Several days later, Hitler--still smarting under the embarrassment created by the recent conference--sent for Goering and several of the top-ranking Luftwaffe leaders. He explained that he had been thinking over the problem of the bomber fleet and had discovered a solution, ". . . Germany has more than enough of those metal cylinders used for oxygen, acetylene, etc. We can fill them with explosives and use them as bombs!"

One of the officers present dared to point out cautiously that they couldn't be aimed properly, that they would flip over in the air, and so forth. Hitler was obviously annoyed--these General Staff people always thought they knew better! Goering, however, seeing a chance to make good his slip at the last conference, was quick to seize it, and replied:

"My Fuehrer, may I express my thanks for this wonderful solution! I must admit that none of us could have thought of such an ingenious idea! You, and you alone, have saved the situation. Good Lord, to think that we're all such dumbbells!, I shall never be able to forgive myself!"

Whereupon Goering's dumbbells, deeply impressed by the perspicacity of their Commander in Chief, went home to discover, upon close study of the technical data involved, that this brilliant solution was no solution at all!

But Goering was not the only one--his General Staff chiefs, too, were more or less fascinated by Hitler's daring flights of fancy. Wever, for example, was a devoted believer in National Socialism and was firmly convinced that Hitler was destined to raise Germany from her status as a second-rate nation. He did not live long enough

to recognize the evils inherent in the system. Kesselring and Stumpff were believers, too, although with serious reservations. As older officers in the General Staff chief's post, they could not remain unaware of Hitler's insufficiencies as a military expert, while the younger officers had had no opportunity to judge for themselves during the years before the war.

In the case of the fourth General Staff Chief, Jeschonnek, who took office on 1 February 1939, the situation was quite different. The historian Richard Suchenwirth has the following to say in this regard:⁵

. . . Politically speaking, the newly appointed General Staff Chief, who had been active in various key posts in the Reichs Air Ministry since the beginning, was personally receptive to the doctrines of the new regime. After all, he was a product of the old Prussian school and did his best to exemplify its ideals (strict discipline, devotion to duty to the exclusion of all personal considerations, subordination of self to a higher purpose, and the tendency to devote oneself to military service with an almost romantic ardor somewhat out of place in a changing world). Reichs Chancellor Hitler, who, after Hindenburg's death, adopted the title Reichs Chancellor and Fuehrer, was wont to emphasize the traditional role of Prussia in his speeches and decrees and to pay homage to Frederick the Great as the epitome of the Prussian ideal. The military aspects of the Prussian ideal also found favor with him, and he lost no time in launching a comprehensive armament program designed to create a strong German armed force. Even Wever had been an enthusiastic follower of Hitler and his new regime, and for Jeschonnek, who was much younger, devotion to this regime soon became the motivating factor in his life. He witnessed Germany's resignation from the League of Nations, the secret rearmament program with the rapid growth of the new Luftwaffe, the reestablishment of Germany's sovereignty as an armed nation, the return of the Saar, and the successful occupation of the Rhineland--all under Hitler's leadership. Prior to World War II still other spectacular successes--the annexation of Austria, the return of the Sudeten

Territory, the reincorporation of the Memel Territory, the establishment of the Protectorates of Bohemia and Moravia, and finally the incorporation of Czechoslovakia in the German sphere of influence--took their place beside the original achievements. It was no wonder that Jeschonnek was imbued with unshakable faith in Hitler's talent for success, in his superior strength, and in his intuition, which had proved itself right time and again in the face of cautious warnings from those traditionally supposed to know, especially from the Army General Staff. Jeschonnek's enthusiasm is all the more understandable when we recall the impression which the collapse of the German Empire must have made on him as a boy in 1918. Even as late as the summer of 1939, it is understandable that his implicit faith in his Fuehrer persuaded him that Hitler would find a way to achieve the other revisions to the Versailles Treaty which he wanted without involving Germany in a European war. After all his demands were limited to Danzig and the Polish Corridor--not even eastern Upper Silesia; he had already renounced Germany's claim to Alsace-Lorraine, given up the German South Tyrol in the interests of friendship with Italy, and had officially declared that the question of the German colonies would not be considered a *casus belli*.

Jeschonnek was fully convinced, and he accepted Hitler's genius, not only in the political sphere but in the military field as well, as an article of faith. In his case, one must speak of personal devotion to Hitler as a leader rather than of adherence to the doctrines of the National Socialist Party . . .

I have nothing to add to the well-substantiated comments of Professor Suchenwirth. In accordance with the motto "love begets love," it is clear that Hitler, for his part, had a great deal of esteem for Jeschonnek as a loyal follower. His appreciation of Jeschonnek's military ability grew in direct proportion to the latter's adherence to his own views and to his (i. e. Hitler's) growing realization of Goering's total lack of military aptitude. Hitler's confidence in Jeschonnek, however, did nothing to mitigate his basic distrust in the General Staff, as such. Even so, during Jeschonnek's tenure as Chief of the

Luftwaffe General Staff, he displayed at least some degree of tolerance towards that body.

It is difficult to estimate the degree to which Jeschonnek's faith in the infallibility of his Fuehrer diminished during the course of the war; he was a man of few words, and apparently he never gave expression to his feelings in this regard. It seems clear, however, that his suicide was motivated not by doubts in regard to Hitler but rather by the unbearable situation which had developed between him and his Commander in Chief, Goering, the eternal intrigues of the clique with which the latter surrounded himself, and finally, the nagging fear that he himself might in some way have been responsible for the collapse of the Luftwaffe. An indication of his unswerving faith in Hitler is a memorandum, justifying his actions as Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff and presenting various recommendations for the future development of the Luftwaffe, which he prepared for Hitler shortly before his death. *6

General der Flieger Guenther Korten, Jeschonnek's successor, was also able to win Hitler's confidence. Here again, the difficulties which Korten faced stemmed less from the Fuehrer's Headquarters than from his Commander in Chief and the latter's immediate circle.

General der Flieger Werner Kreipe, however, who succeeded Korten when the latter was killed in the unsuccessful attempt on Hitler's life in July 1944, was to witness a complete break between Hitler and the Luftwaffe General Staff. Kreipe's earnest efforts to persuade Hitler to reorganize his armament program with greater emphasis on home air defense (particularly to authorize production of the jet fighter which Hitler wanted to use as a fast fighter-bomber) met with immediate and adamant resistance. It was at this time that Hitler demanded that Generaloberst Robert Ritter von Greim be appointed to the Fuehrer's Headquarters as Luftwaffe general and that he be given full authority to act for the Luftwaffe. This meant, of course, that both the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, and the Chief

* The exact wording of this memorandum is a matter of controversy; the memorandum, apparently, is no longer in existence. See footnote 6.

of the Luftwaffe General Staff were to be ignored--in short, it was a vote of no-confidence against Goering as well as a categorical refusal to deal with the General Staff. Generaloberst von Greim, however, an officer and a gentleman, soon asked to be relieved from his position at the Fuehrer's Headquarters and, with his resignation, the situation reverted to what it had been. Now Hitler began to depend upon his personal pilot, a former Lufthansa captain named Bauer, for competent advice in questions concerning the Luftwaffe. Although he held the rank of an SS-Gruppenfuehrer and was a Generalleutnant in the police force, Bauer was no more than a layman in military affairs in general and Luftwaffe affairs in particular. His knowledge was limited to the things which any older experienced pilot had to know about his trade. His gems of wisdom, however, --typical of these was his comment that he could fly a Ju-52 to London and back without the slightest difficulty--found a willing and interested listener in Hitler, and had much to do with the latter's tendency to term any objections brought up by the General Staff to his fantastic demands as pessimism, defeatism, and sabotage. Without any doubt it was partly due to Bauer that Hitler's antipathy towards the General Staff gradually turned into intense hatred.

Hitler's attitude towards the General Staff was bound to lead to the conspiracy of Army General Staff leaders on 20 July 1944. They saw in Hitler not only the General Staff's most implacable enemy but also the ultimate ruin of the German people, and felt that it was their duty towards the nation to put a stop to his activity. That no one from the Luftwaffe General Staff participated in this conspiracy was not due to the fact that none of them would have been willing to act against Hitler, but simply that no attempt was made to take anyone from the Luftwaffe into confidence regarding the plot. This, in turn, was probably due to the traditional feeling on the part of the Army General Staff that the Luftwaffe was National Socialist, both in tendency and sympathy, and was not to be trusted with the undertaking at hand.

Even General der Flieger Karl Koller, the last Luftwaffe Chief of Staff, was unable to improve the relationship between the Luftwaffe General Staff and the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. He was successful, with his down-to-earth Bavarian frankness, in

awakening a certain feeling of sympathy in Hitler, which, of course, was of great help to him in pushing through his requests on behalf of the Luftwaffe. However, their personal association did nothing to mitigate Hitler's basic distrust and hatred towards the General Staff as a whole.

In summary, it is clear that, from the very beginning, Hitler relied implicitly on Goering and his all-encompassing promises in all matters pertaining to the Luftwaffe. For this reason, he refrained from interfering in the work of the Luftwaffe General Staff--at least as long as things were going well. Moreover, the excellent work done by the Luftwaffe General Staff in organizing and building up the new force was so apparent to everyone that there was really no basis for criticism. The performance of the young Luftwaffe during the early campaigns of the war was also above reproach, although here the credit did not go so much to the General Staff Chief and his colleagues as to Goering, whom Hitler overwhelmed with praise and honors during this period. Hitler and Goering firmly believed that they alone were responsible for these early military successes and this conviction naturally led to their depending less and less on the General Staff. This attitude led to greater and greater difficulties as the war went on. Hitler arbitrarily considered himself responsible for the victories and blamed the incompetence of the General Staff for the defeats. Inevitably, Hitler's direct intervention in the command function often had a catastrophic influence on the events of the war and also did much to undermine the mutual confidence between the troops and the General Staff.

As far as the Luftwaffe was concerned, the following instances of Hitler's interference proved to have especially serious consequences:

1. Hitler's demand of 6 December 1938 for the establishment of a so-called Fuehrer-program, which called for an expansion of the Luftwaffe completely beyond the available means. The result, of course, was a shift in emphasis from vertical to horizontal growth which made it impossible later on to compensate adequately for war-time losses resulting from the greatly increased scope of activity. The ultimate consequence was the rapid exhaustion of Luftwaffe

striking power because of a lack of adequately trained replacement personnel.

2. Hitler's demand that the Luftwaffe expend every effort to destroy the British army at Dunkirk, although such action was not at all necessary from the standpoint of military efficiency. As a result, the Luftwaffe sustained serious losses without attaining the hoped-for degree of success.

3. The stubborn continuation of the Battle of Britain even after it had become apparent that further efforts were pointless. The result was a further weakening of Luftwaffe strength through losses of materiel and--more important--of experienced personnel, losses which had not yet been made up by the time the war ended.

4. Hitler's order of 11 September 1941 to cease all developmental work which could not be completed within one year. This order put an immediate stop to research and developmental activity on aircraft models and engines and, as the war progressed, resulted in the Luftwaffe's hopeless inferiority to the enemy in these respects. It was particularly catastrophic in that it precluded any further work on the Me 262, a jet fighter aircraft which, if its development and production had been speeded up in time, would have given Germany a considerable advantage over the Allies and might have effected a revolutionary change in the air situation.

5. Hitler's order to supply Stalingrad by air. This resulted in a further weakening of Luftwaffe units which were, in any case, already occupied beyond capacity with air supply operations elsewhere.

6. Hitler's order of 1944 that tank production be given priority over air armament despite the fact that the situation of the Luftwaffe was clearly desperate.

7. Hitler's stubborn insistence on utilizing the jet fighter (on which developmental work had continued despite the order of September 1941) as a fighter-bomber. In the end not a single one of the types developed was ever used as a fighter-bomber at the front. By the

time the aircraft finally did make its debut as a jet fighter, it was too late for it to do very much good; it was not until nearly the end of the war that a few were ready for employment at the front. Through his stubbornness and his conviction that he knew better than anyone else, Hitler lightly threw away Germany's chance to gain an advantage over the enemy.

The above instances of interference by Hitler in the fields of air armament planning and the employment of the Luftwaffe are certainly not the only ones; however, they were the most decisive in effect and were clearly factors which helped to bring about the final collapse of this new and very promising branch of the Armed Forces. To be fair, on the other hand, we must realize that such interference would probably have been impossible--at least in the form in which it occurred--if the Luftwaffe had had as chief a man capable of convincing his Supreme Commander, by well-founded and reasonable arguments--based on ability and experience--, of the realistic potentialities and requirements of his branch and of the most rewarding fields for its employment.

Section II: The Armed Forces High Command and the Luftwaffe General Staff

We have already discussed the organizational structure of the Armed Forces High Command and the posts allotted to Luftwaffe personnel serving on that body.

The relationship between the Luftwaffe General Staff and the Armed Forces High Command--which was the personal planning staff of Hitler in his capacity as Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces--was influenced first, by the relatively minor position of the staff in the military hierarchy and second, by Goering's tendency towards self-glorification. The Chief of the Armed Forces High Command, Field Marshal Keitel, was not a strong enough personality to maintain himself against a man like Goering. Goering himself recognized orders originating in the Armed Forces High Command only if they were issued specifically in the name of the Fuehrer or

had been discussed and approved in advance by the Luftwaffe General Staff. Goering's testimony at the Nuremberg trials provides eloquent proof of his attitude:⁷

. . . the Commanders in Chief of the three Armed Forces branches were directly subordinate and responsible to the Fuehrer. They were in no way--in no way whatsoever--subordinate to the Armed Forces High Command . . .

For example, an order or directive from the Armed Forces High Command to me as Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, would be inconceivable unless it began with the words 'The Fuehrer has ordered . . . ' or 'In the name of the Fuehrer you are informed that . . . ' To put it drastically, I once told Generaloberst Keitel that the only orders I considered binding were those from the Fuehrer. I explained that the only original orders I ever saw were those bearing the signature Adolf Hitler. All those beginning with 'At the Fuehrer's orders . . . ' or 'In the name of the Fuehrer . . . ' went to my General Staff Chief, and the important points were then summarized for me at the staff conferences. Under these circumstances--and this is what I meant by putting it drastically--I told Keitel that it was completely irrelevant as far as I was concerned whether the signature 'By order of the Fuehrer, Keitel, Generaloberst' or 'By order of the Fuehrer, Meier, Private First Class.' I told Keitel that if he was considering sending me direct orders signed by himself, he might just as well save himself the time and paper, because I wouldn't consider them binding anyway--I was Commander in Chief and as such responsible only to the Fuehrer . . .

In reality, however, Goering's attitude towards the authority of the Armed Forces High Command did not have any serious effect on the day-to-day business of that office with the Luftwaffe General Staff. Both partners were eager to avoid any friction which would disrupt their work and went out of their way to be cooperative. The common background of General Staff training and experience did much

to ensure smooth coordination and a reasonable degree of unanimity regarding the needs of the military situation. The only deviations of opinion in the latter respect were those occasioned by Hitler's arbitrary demands that military operations be conducted as he saw fit-- and this was something against which the General Staff officers of the Armed Forces High Command could do little or nothing. Important military decisions were either made by Hitler alone or were based on factors which lay outside the sphere of influence of the Armed Forces High Command.

In general, the opinion prevailed that the Armed Forces High Command and its chief were little more than yes-men. It is no wonder that they enjoyed as little prestige with the Luftwaffe General Staff as with the General Staffs of the other Armed Forces branches. As a result, the Armed Forces High Command was felt to be a parallel rather than a superior agency, whose chief duty was to straighten out family quarrels within the services. Its effectiveness as an instrument of military command becomes conspicuous by its absence when we think of the great authority enjoyed by the top-level command of the Army during World War I.

At the beginning of World War II there was, to be sure, a certain uniformity in the views of the three Armed Forces branches concerning the conduct of operations. But as the war progressed and the military difficulties faced by the German Reich grew more and more critical, the importance of the Armed Forces High Command as an authoritative military instrument dwindled in direct proportion to the growing need for just such an instrument.

The Armed Forces High Command failed completely to supply the effective support which the Luftwaffe General Staff needed so badly. There was a certain reluctance to interfere in any way with Luftwaffe affairs, because no one in the Armed Forces High Command was willing to risk the danger of a clash with Goering--at least not so long as he enjoyed Hitler's favor.

This feeling of reluctance diminished gradually during the course of the war, however, as is evidenced by the fact that the Army

High Command had no compunctions about pushing through its plan to speed up the tank procurement program at the expense of the Luftwaffe armament program--and this without even consulting Luftwaffe leaders.

The comments of General der Flieger Koller, the last Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff,⁸ are of interest in connection with the relationship between the Armed Forces High Command and the Luftwaffe High Command during the last phase of the war.

In June 1944, in order to counter the many recent attacks on Luftwaffe policy, I took advantage of a small conference at the Obersalzberg to point out the weakness of Luftwaffe armament resources, and voiced my feeling that the Armed Forces High Command, which ought to have supported the Luftwaffe armament program in the interests of the Armed Forces and the nation as a whole, had limited itself to negative criticism. I stated frankly that our top military leaders had simply neglected their duty in this connection.

And with this I had stumbled into a wasps' nest! They refused to consider my arguments and tried to persuade me that Goering would not have countenanced any participation by the Armed Forces High Command in the affairs of the Luftwaffe, that he would have termed it interference and forbidden it. There can be no doubt of the inaccuracy of this contention. To be sure, Goering was not a man to countenance interference, but he would certainly have welcomed constructive support and assistance from the Armed Forces High Command in improving the Luftwaffe's armament situation.

The above passage clearly illustrates the unhealthy tendency of the Armed Forces High Command leaders--most of whom were from the Army General Staff--to refuse to interest themselves in the problems of the Luftwaffe. In fact, one often had the impression that the Army was considered the sole decisive branch of the Armed Forces and that the other two--particularly the Luftwaffe--were merely auxiliary troops and expected to get along on their own. If

Luftwaffe and Navy leaders had been given more responsible posts in the Armed Forces High Command, this attitude might have been avoided. Hitler would never have permitted a reshuffling of his planning staff to this end, because his views on war and its problems were very much those which had prevailed during World War I, and at that time, of course, the Army was the most important military force. On the other hand, neither the Luftwaffe nor the Navy was much interested in having greater responsibility in the Armed Forces High Command, since it would have meant a certain loss in their quite considerable independence of action.

It is a well-known fact that the top-ranking members of the Armed Forces High Command had no influence over the fantastic plans of the Fuehrer. History cannot but reproach them for this. From the vantage point of today it seems incredible that these men let themselves be hypnotized into acquiescence by Hitler's demoniacal fantasies, whose lack of military soundness must have been obvious.

The lower echelons of the General Staffs of all three branches of the service gained little if any accurate knowledge of what was really going on. Few of these lower ranking officers were acquainted with the personalities and military prowess of the men at the top. Fuehrer Directive No. 1* made it impossible for them to obtain adequate information regarding the over-all policies governing the conduct of the war and domestic politics. The troop general staffs trusted their superiors and comrades at the top because they traditionally assumed them to be men of character and officers capable of sound and objective planning. The gradual change in these men, brought about by Hitler's unbelievable successes in both the military and political spheres and by the tremendous influence which his personality exerted over the persons around him, was never clearly recognized by the men in the lower General Staff posts. The change in Field Marshal Keitel, however, became generally apparent, as is indicated by the widespread use of the nickname "Lakai-tel"† during

* See Introduction to this study.

† Translator's Note: This is a play on words; the word "Lakai" (accented on the last syllable) means "lackey."

the last years of the war.

Section III: Goering and his General Staff

The relationship of the Luftwaffe General Staff to its Commander in Chief was subject to various and changing influences. Basically, the tone was set by the extremely friendly association existing between Goering and his first General Staff Chief, General Wever. Wever's personal integrity and his tremendous efficiency made a lasting impression on his chief, and were certainly instrumental in inspiring the attitude of trust and confidence which Goering displayed towards all the Luftwaffe General Staff Officers. The success of this early relationship influenced Goering to grant the Luftwaffe General Staff officers complete independence in carrying out their work--at least during the early developmental years.

Field Marshal Kesselring describes the early relationship as follows:⁹

In Reichsmarschall Herman Goering, the Luftwaffe had a former flight officer, a National Socialist, and a generous man as its Commander in Chief. He required a great deal from us generals in the Reichs Air Ministry, but he gave us complete freedom of action and shielded us from all political criticism. In my long years as a soldier, I have never been so free of outside influences and so able to act independently as during this early period of Luftwaffe development (from 1933 on), when I served as Chief of the Luftwaffe Administration Office, Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff, and as a field commander.

The personal respect which Goering felt for the leading officers in the Reichs Air Ministry facilitated his decision to approve the formation of a Luftwaffe General Staff. In a sense, this decision represented a sincere vote of confidence on Goering's part, especially since all his friends from former days and particularly his State Secretary, Milch, were bitterly opposed to a General Staff for the

Luftwaffe.

The author of this study was himself a witness to a number of sharp and unreasonable attacks on the General Staff idea made by Milch and General Udet during the summer of 1937. Goering's replies were equally sharp and implied unmistakably that he felt their arguments to be the result of petty envy and a feeling of inferiority.

The confidence which Goering felt in his first General Staff Chief certainly had some effect on his attitude towards the subsequent Chiefs. The friction which later developed was not due to a basic change in this attitude, but rather to specific events of the war which we shall discuss more fully later on. It is understandable, of course, that Hitler's antipathy towards the General Staff may have influenced Goering to a certain extent; however, Goering's antipathy was restricted more or less to the Army General Staff, and a certain feeling of closeness and solidarity--as well as a personal need to belong--bound him to his own General Staff. On the other hand, he was easily swayed by the comments of close friends and younger, inexperienced combat officers (particularly those who had distinguished themselves in combat), and when under these influences was quite capable of turning against the General Staff as the proper instrument of command. These moods never lasted very long, however, for he was shrewd enough to realize that he was wholly dependent upon the General Staff in matters of command.

Goering's alleged rages at the General Staff--particularly after a Luftwaffe defeat--were not taken too seriously by that organization; they helped, however, to disrupt his relationship to it on more than one occasion during the war.

Goering's almost pathological vanity made it impossible for him to permit the achievements of his General Staff Chiefs to be praised in public. It was the duty of the Chief to remain in the background--even as far as the Luftwaffe itself was concerned. Generaloberst Jeschonnek, as the first wartime General Staff Chief, was the one to suffer most as a result of Goering's hunger for personal fame. Goering almost never recommended his General Staff officers for

decorations, "after all, they were only aides, and aides have no right to decorations"10 Under no circumstances were the General Staff members permitted to appear publicly as leading personalities within the Luftwaffe--which did not deter Goering from demanding the maximum from them in performance and self-sacrificing devotion to duty. Inasmuch as this practice was a part of the ancient General Staff tradition, they accepted it in fairly good grace. In the long run, however, the rod is not enough to ensure continual top performance--an occasional pat on the back is also required.

During the course of the war, the Luftwaffe General Staff gradually built up a kind of defense front against its Commander in Chief. Thus, Goering gradually lost the confidence of the Luftwaffe General Staff as the war progressed. When Generaloberst Korten died of injuries sustained in the unsuccessful plot against Hitler's life on 20 July 1944, Goering was hard put to find a willing successor for him. Again, after General Kreipe's comparatively short incumbency as General Staff Chief, it was only with difficulty that Goering was able to persuade General Koller to take over the job.

In this connection the notes which General Koller made after his interview with Goering are of interest:¹¹

Interviews with Goering in the Wolfschanze* on 5 November 1944 from 1400 to 1520, 1800 to 2000, and 2200 to 2400. Reichsmarschall tells me the entire story of his life, describes his work, his contributions to the development of the Luftwaffe. Deeply unhappy, complains of the attacks directed at him from all sides--Army, SS, Party. Discusses the general situation and says resignedly that he's had enough--sick and tired of the whole business and doesn't want to hear any more about it; wishes he were dead.

Tells me he wanted to join the parachute troops at the front, but the Fuehrer won't let him go and says that he's the

* "Wolfschanze" was the Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe.

only man who can build up the Luftwaffe again.

Reichsmarschall continues, describing his unsuccessful attempts to persuade General Kreipe to stay on as General Staff Chief and the difficulties he had in connection with Generaloberst von Greim and General Generalleutnant Kurt Pflugbeil. *

Reichsmarschall speaks with bitter reproach of a memorandum prepared by von Greim, recommending that all Luftwaffe headquarters be placed under the command of the Chief of Air Operations, (i. e. under von Greim himself), leaving Goering only a few crumbs of authority. (At this point I feel I have to interrupt to explain that von Greim's recommendations were not meant that way at all.) Reichsmarschall agrees reluctantly and says that Colonel Kless[†] was probably responsible for persuading von Greim to choose the wording he did.

Reichsmarschall says he's reached the end of his rope, has no one besides me on his side . . . asks me to take on the post of Chief of the General Staff.

After much beating around the bush, Goering says there's no other alternative and I have no choice but to accept the assignment.

My reply: Much as I regret it in this instance, I am a soldier and my first duty is obedience. I accept under one condition; that I be permitted to express my opinion frankly and freely and to state the truth as I see it.

Reichsmarschall beams and assures me that this condition goes without saying, shakes my hand twice . . .

* Both of these officers were considered for the post of Luftwaffe General, Fuehrer Headquarters or, as von Greim suggested it be called, Chief of Air Operations.

† Colonel Kless was Generaloberst von Greim's chief of staff in the Sixth Air Fleet.

The remarks cited above are most illuminating. Not only do they reveal the severe mental depression to which Goering was prey during this period, but they also serve to illustrate his dependence upon the General Staff. It is indicative of his situation that he was overjoyed to accept as General Staff Chief a man whom he had already rejected in this connection under different circumstances, as is revealed by the following passage taken from the diary of General Kriepe, Koller's predecessor, and referring to an interview between Goering and himself:¹²

3 October 1944: And then on to Karinhall, * where von Greim was closeted with Goering--Goering apparently in a towering rage. Finally I was summoned to Goering . . . I found him alone and deeply upset. He complained that they were trying to shut him out, Greim was a traitor, he (Goering) was and intended to remain Commander in Chief, Greim was finished as far as far as he was concerned--might just as well go right back to his Air Fleet. Now he (Goering) had no one to turn to. He begged me not to desert him, said I had to stand by him. I pointed out that I had the impression that the whole business seemed to be a plot directed against him personally. The only thing I could suggest was the assignment of General Koller, who--as far as I knew--still had Hitler's confidence, to the Chief's post. Goering made no comment on my first remark. As far as Koller was concerned, he told me that he had considered him once before, in late July (i. e. after Korten's death), and would prefer to avoid that solution if at all possible--he said that he didn't think he and Koller would be able to work harmoniously together for any length of time.

When Generaloberst Koller took office as General Staff chief on 25 November 1944, Goering delivered a speech before the assembled General Staff officers (an unprecedented thing for him to do). Goering's remarks reveal better than any other source the total

* Goering's estate, located on the Schorfheide near Berlin.

picture of his personality, his views on Germany's position, and his concept of the General Staff and its mission. His comments are indicative of a certain basic primitiveness, combined with healthy common sense and flavored with humor; the speech is filled with somewhat long-winded argumentation, which may be interpreted as an expression of his feeling of insecurity towards the General Staff. Now that he was alone, abandoned by many of his former friends and associates, fallen from Hitler's favor, and facing the complete collapse of his Luftwaffe, Goering was desperately eager to reassociate himself with that group which had done such a fine job of building the Luftwaffe, i. e. with the Luftwaffe General Staff! The reassociation was not to be of long duration, however, as we shall see later on, nor did it spring from an inner desire on Goering's part, but was motivated rather by the urgency of the moment. This is clear from a study written by General Paul Deichmann, in which he has the following to say regarding the position of the Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff during wartime:¹³

. . . The relationship existing between Goering and his General Staff Chiefs during the war had little in common with the classic examples of history, such as Blucher/Gneisenau, for example. It resembled much more the legendary relationship between a sultan and his grand vizier, whereby the latter lived in constant dread of being beheaded or thrown into prison at his master's whim. In his book Der letzte Monat (The Last Month), General Koller describes Goering's continual threats of court martial, concentration camp, and execution.

We must admit in all fairness that this unsatisfactory relationship between the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, and his General Staff Chiefs only developed gradually as the war took its course, particularly from that time on when the Luftwaffe began to suffer defeat. However, even at the beginning of the war, the association of these two personalities was not entirely what it should have been. The reasons for this are probably the following:

Goering considered himself the sole creator of the Luftwaffe. Moreover, he was determined that he, and he alone,

should receive credit for its successes; he had no intention of sharing this credit with anyone else. It was for this reason that he limited the power of decision of his General Staff and retained personal control over many minor details. He objected strongly whenever the General Staff Chief dared to make inspection visits to subordinate headquarters or to troop units without him in order to orient himself on conditions.

In the beginning Goering usually attended the conferences with the Fuehrer himself; whenever he was unable to do so (or preferred not to do so, as was almost always the case later on, when the air situation had become so desperately critical), he sent as representative not the General Staff Chief, but some other officer from his staff (frequently the intelligence officer from the Luftwaffe High Command). When he did finally agree to send the General Staff Chief--probably at Hitler's insistence--the latter no longer had any authority to make a final decision anyway.

Whenever Goering made inspection visits together with the General Staff Chief, it was apparent to all observers that the latter functioned only as an order-taker. 'Write this down . . . , 'See that such and such is done . . . ' were the usual remarks addressed to the General Staff Chief by his Commander in Chief on these occasions.

The General Staff Chief, who had quite enough to keep him busy, spent a great deal of time in fulfilling social obligations and in waiting for Goering. If the latter was in conference with Hitler, for example, the General Staff Chief was expected to wait hours on end at Fuehrer Headquarters in case he might be needed to furnish information on some particular matter.

Goering's penchant for retiring to remote places, such as the Reichs Hunting Lodge at Rominten (East Prussia), often made it necessary for the Chief of the General Staff to work with a diminished staff in Goering's railroad car for

months at a time. In this connection, General von Waldau's¹⁴ diary¹⁵ gives us a further hint:

'I've been trying to keep my distance from the Chief (i. e. Goering); it's not compatible with work to have to keep company with him and to eat all the time . . . '

It would be unfair if we should try to make the General Staff Chief responsible for certain events over which he had little or no influence. This is particularly true of technological matters, in which the leading role was played by the deputy Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, the State Secretary and Inspector General Erhard Milch. Ernst Heinkel,* in his memoirs,¹⁶ (the value or rather lack of value of which it is not my province to judge) states:

'The creation of the new position (i. e. Milch's appointment as Goering's deputy) was rather unfortunate in that it prevented the development of a real top-level command agency within the Luftwaffe. There were countless occasions when close contact between Goering and the Chief of the General Staff would have been profitable; in every case Milch's robust figure stood between them and could not be circumvented. '

Heinkel's remarks are essentially accurate. Ever since 1937, when the General Staff was removed from its position of subordination to the State Secretary (after a serious disagreement between Milch and General Staff Chief Kesselring), Milch had been jealously on guard to see that no one from the General Staff should have any say in the technological matters nominally entrusted to him. Thus, since 1937 the General Staff had hardly been in a position to push through its thoroughly justifiable armament requirements (particularly in regard to the development of new aircraft models). The only way was

* Heinkel was the director of the Heinkel Aircraft Works.

to go directly to Goering, but this involved numerous difficulties and, in any case, was rarely successful.* A further factor which served to weaken the position of the General Staff Chief was Goering's penchant for using his personal friends as unofficial advisors. Chief among these were (Karl) Bodenschatz, (Chief of the Ministerial Office, with whom Goering had been associated since before the war), (Bruno) Loerzer, and (Alfred) Keller. As a result, the General Staff Chief not only had to convince Goering of his views, but also had to struggle against prejudices and preconceived notions planted in his mind by these advisors. As the fortunes of war varied, Goering resorted to other advisors as well--a colonel whose hobby was graphology, for example, and a professor from Kassel with an allegedly clairvoyant wand whose gyrations influenced Goering's decisions . . .

After the war, Goering came to realize the unhealthy influence of the individuals with whom he had surrounded himself--as is indicated by his comment that 'now he knew who his real friends had been . . .'

We need add little to the foregoing comments--made by a man who witnessed much at first hand during his association with the Reichsmarschall--in order to obtain a full picture of the personal relationship between Goering and his General Staff Chiefs. The only thing we might point out is the fact that an older officer, such as Wever or Kesselring, would not have countenanced such treatment from Goering; and this is precisely the reason why Goering preferred to have a younger officer as General Staff Chief and, as a matter of fact, to surround himself with younger men. General Jeschonnek cannot escape a good deal of the blame for encouraging this tendency. He deliberately called Goering's attention to younger officers who had

* This situation changed for the better in 1944 when the Chief of Technical Air Armament, taking the place of the former Chief of Luftwaffe Procurement and Supply, was made directly subordinate to the Chief of the General Staff. By this time, however, it was too late to achieve any real improvement in the technical armament situation.

distinguished themselves in action--men like Storp, Diesing, Harlinghausen, and Peltz*--in order that the Reichsmarschall might obtain an accurate picture of actual conditions at the front. The result, however, was not quite what Jeschonnek intended. As the war continued, Goering tended more and more to go directly to these young men, without consulting his General Staff Chief, and to solicit their advice. Goering overlooked the fact that these young officers could not possibly possess more than limited specialized experience, but that--in their confident immaturity--they might easily be tempted to voice an authoritative opinion in matters of which they had no real knowledge.

In this way the General Staff Chief himself brought unofficial and, in part, irresponsible advisors into the Reichsmarschall's vicinity. One of them, Diesing, went over to Goering's camp entirely and worked so openly against Jeschonnek that the latter was constrained to term him a traitor.

Goering's so-called "Kindergarten," a group of young officers under the leadership of Chief Adjutant von Brauchitsch[†] (all of them much decorated for valor in action) who had succeeded in working their way gradually into the personal staff of the Reichsmarschall, had a decidedly detrimental influence on Goering's attitude towards his General Staff Chief and thus on the work of the General Staff itself.

Not only was their influence--exerted during the course of evening discussions around the fireplace--unhealthy, but they also managed to form a tightly-knit clique with other younger officers and comrades serving in various headquarters staffs and at the front. The collective influence of this clique on Goering made the work of the General Staff unbearably difficult and played a not inconsiderable role in the final break between Goering and Jeschonnek.

The influence exerted by the Reichsmarschall's personal circle

* Editor's Note: Generalmajor Walter Storp, Generalmajor Ulrich Diesing, Generalleutnant Martin Harlinghausen, Generalmajor Dietrich Peltz.

† The son of Feldmarschall von Brauchitsch.

of friends was also highly undesirable. The majority of these were officers whom Goering had known during World War I, men whose knowledge of modern military operations was sadly limited, but who--thanks to Goering's patronage--had been promoted with comet-like rapidity. A number of them were constantly in Goering's vicinity, and the influence which their comments exerted on him was anything but conducive to a smooth relationship with the General Staff. A report¹⁷ by the last General Staff Chief, General Koller, serves to enlighten us further in this respect:

The Reichsmarschall must also be blamed for the frequency with which conferences and orientation periods were simply broken off before a decision had been reached. He solicited the advice of anyone and everyone--the Chief of Luftwaffe Procurement and Supply, the State Secretary, any young squadron captains or unit commanders who happened to be around--no matter how fantastic and immature his ideas might be. None of them knew what any of the others had said, and the Chief of the General Staff was almost always the last one to hear (often quite by accident) what it was all about. Then, too, Goering was very receptive to the remarks of the often irresponsible men making up his circle of associates, most of whom were totally incompetent and had absolutely no idea of the problems involved . . .

General Koller, who served for many years as Chief of the Luftwaffe Operations Staff and ultimately as Chief of the General Staff, was in a particularly good position to observe events at first hand. He has the following to say regarding the role played by the younger General Staff officers in Goering's personal staff:

It was extremely unfortunate that the Reichsmarschall preferred to fill his personal staff with such young officers, men from the flying forces, antiaircraft artillery units, or signal troops who had had only a few years' experience as soldiers. Most of them had had no really thorough training--at least no all-around training--, and at most only a few weeks of General Staff experience. It is no wonder that their

views were immature and their professional and personal experience painfully limited. Their training spotty and incomplete, they tended to be conceited and the heady atmosphere into which they came often had the effect of turning them into megalomaniacs and spinners of intrigues. They were taken into the General Staff even before they had had any basic training, and given the right to wear the coveted crimson stripe on their trousers; they were promoted with astonishing rapidity--over the heads of their comrades; and they were accorded a position of influence which they were totally unqualified to fill. These youngsters were infuriatingly quick to pass judgment on anything and anyone--commanders in chief, generals to whom they were abysmally inferior in professional knowledge and personal savoir faire, men who could have been their fathers. They were just as quick to pass judgment on technical matters or on questions pertaining to the employment of forces. That Goering's "court clique" came in for a great deal of adverse criticism from troops and command as well as from leaders in the top echelons of the Luftwaffe itself is a well-known fact.

The several passages which we have cited in this section, stemming from men who had ample opportunity during their period of service as Chiefs of the General Staff to become intimately acquainted with Goering's professional qualifications and personal attitudes, require no further comment. They provide a complete picture of Goering's rather extraordinary personality and of the relationship between him and his General Staff Chiefs, who by rights ought to have been his closest co-workers. He was a man of tremendous energy, quick to explode in impulsive rage, and then--in smug self-conceit--to sit back and let things run their course; a personality characterized by an inordinate degree of self-confidence out of all proportion to his actual professional ability and, at the same time, by a feeling of insecurity in keeping with his lack of ability. Outwardly brutal and ruthless, he was filled with an almost childlike reverence, tempered by fear, for his Fuehrer, which made him constantly eager to anticipate the latter's every wish, regardless of whether or not it might be capable of practical realization. For the General Staff Chiefs, Goering

was an extremely comfortable superior so long as things were going well, but an unbearable burden in a crisis--precisely the time when the positive qualities of a strong commander in chief are most urgently needed to support his co-workers. Instead of doing everything in his power to strengthen the instrument which had performed so well for him, he viewed it with mistrust, belittled it in public and before the troops, blunted it by continual amateurish interference, and, ultimately, was responsible in good part for its defeat and collapse.

Section IV: The State Secretary and the General Staff

The position of the State Secretary, Erhard Milch, within the Reichs Air Ministry had little in common with the post of state secretary within the parliamentary government of a democratic state. This position was created as an aid to Goering, whose many and varied obligations prevented him from devoting as much time to his duties as Minister of Aviation as seemed desirable. Besides, it was necessary to create some sort of post for the director of the Luftwaffe (Milch), to whom Hitler had incurred certain obligations during the early struggles of his political career; and the position established had to be one which would utilize his experience in the field of aviation and, at the same time, satisfy his ambition. It is for the latter reason that the State Secretary was designated as the permanent deputy of both the Minister of Aviation and the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe. In the latter capacity, of course, he had authority over the Chief of the General Staff, with his various departments, as well as over the chiefs of the troop staffs.

In keeping with ancient tradition, the Chief of the General Staff is the primary advisor of his commander in chief--a function for which his personality, training, and experience ideally should suit him; obviously, then, serious friction is bound to develop when the post of State Secretary is held by a man who has none of the above-mentioned qualifications, but who insists upon being recognized as the first and only advisor of the minister, even in purely military matters. Thus it is no wonder that the poor relationship between the State Secretary and the Chiefs of the General Staff is an ever recurring theme in this study. I shall not repeat here those comments which I have

already made.

In order that the reader may have a more thorough understanding of the situation, I should like to emphasize here the extraordinarily strong position enjoyed by Milch as a result of his close connection with the Party and with Hitler himself. Taking this fact into consideration, it is easy to understand why Goering--who was anything but fond of Milch--was unable to rid himself of the State Secretary. All attempts to reduce Milch's authority in favor of the Chief of the General Staff were doomed to failure by the State Secretary's ruthless determination to hold on to his position and the privileges appertaining thereto.* Once the war had begun, however, and particularly after 1944, Milch's position grew gradually less important.

In order not to jeopardize the closeness of the ties which bound him to the Party (and also in order to keep himself fully informed on the latest political developments), Milch employed a high Party functionary as special duty staff assistant on his personal staff. He gained the man's loyalty by giving him civil service status and by arranging to have him promoted to high ministerial rank. No one was deceived as to Milch's true purpose, of course, but in the last analysis this man proved to be a boon to the Luftwaffe as a whole; because of him, Milch was able to handle any attacks on the Luftwaffe made by the Party right in his own office, and the Luftwaffe officers did not need to bother about them.

In order to compensate for the fact that his qualifications for the post of deputy to the Commander in Chief were painfully few, Milch did his best to impress the General Staff Chief and his colleagues with his admittedly unusual talent for organization and his allegedly all-encompassing knowledge of technological matters. Inasmuch as his experience in both fields was based exclusively on his activity as director of the Lufthansa, his audience was less impressed than irritated, thinking--quite correctly--that the principles applicable to the operation of a commercial enterprise such as the Lufthansa could

* See also Chapter 4, above.

not be entirely applicable to military conditions.

The first serious disagreement began to develop when General Kesselring took office as Chief of the General Staff,^{*} and had its climax in Kesselring's voluntary resignation from this post; Stumpff then became General Staff Chief. The State Secretary had won, but his victory was Pyrrhic in that he was relieved of his authority over the General Staff Chief. In a letter dated 21 February 1954,¹⁸ Milch describes the effects of this move as he saw them and evaluates the influence on subsequent events of the over-all reorganization in the Luftwaffe top-level command apparatus:

. . . In the summer of 1937, Goering reorganized the top-level command apparatus of the Luftwaffe; some of the results of his reorganization were the following:

1. The close cooperation previously existing among the General Staff, the office of the Chief of Luftwaffe Procurement and Supply,[†] the Personnel Office, and the rest of the departments of the Reichs Air Ministry was diminished considerably. A further factor in this connection was the high rate of turnover in the incumbency of key positions, e. g. during the years 1933 through 1945 there were no fewer than eight Chiefs of the General Staff.

2. The Junkers and Dornier four-engine bombers were not approved for mass production, despite the fact that the test models had proved highly promising. As a result Germany had no really adequate aircraft model for use in strategic operations; without any doubt, this is one of the reasons for the failure of the air offensive against Britain and for the Luftwaffe's inability to provide adequate air protection for German submarines at sea.

^{*} See above, pp. 31-32.

[†] Milch means the Air Technical Office; the office of the Chief of Luftwaffe Procurement and Supply was not established until later.

3. The production of aircraft instruments, which had increased steadily until 1937, was allowed to level off and was not stepped up again until 1942.* The same was true of research and developmental activity on new aircraft types and modern aircraft equipment, such as power units for turbojet engines (a project assigned to Junkers and the Bavarian Motor Works in 1936), new piston-driven engines, etc.

4. According to the plans developed in 1933, bomber aircraft were to have first priority in order to build up a minimum deterrent force to discourage the Western Powers from interfering in Germany's rearmament activity. After 1937-38 top priority was to go to the fighter aircraft, first the day fighters and then the night fighters. This shift in emphasis never took place. And neither the technical performance nor the airborne armaments of the few fighters being produced (approximately 200 per month by the end of the second year of war) had taken full advantage of the technological possibilities.

5. During the period from 1 September 1939 through 15 November 1941, the aircraft production program was subject to no fewer than sixteen thoroughgoing revisions, not a single one of which was carried through as planned. As a result, the industrial plants concerned were thoroughly confused regarding series production and developmental work. During the year 1942, for example, there was no fixed schedule for delivery of new or refitted aircraft and engines to the front. The technological aspect of Luftwaffe development had come to a full stop, both quantitatively and qualitatively, by the end of 1941. A complete reorganization was urgently needed and, indeed, it began to have a favorable effect after about eight months until all progress was stopped by Allied bombardments on the one hand and interference from above on

* I. e., until Udet's death, at which time Milch took over the duties of the Chief of Luftwaffe Procurement and Supply.

on the other (e. g. the ban on developing and producing the Me-262 as a fighter) . . .

So much for the State Secretary's personal views. While the items which he mentions are certainly contributing factors to the final collapse of the Luftwaffe, he still (21 February 1954) insists on blaming them all on the reorganization of 1937, which removed the Chief of the General Staff--and, incidentally, Udet as well--from his immediate command. He neglects to mention, however, that this situation was changed six months later--at the suggestion of General Stumpff, Kesselring's successor--and that from that time on Milch was once more exclusively responsible for technical air armament, without any possibility of interference on the part of the Chief of the General Staff.* Thus one might be tempted to interpret his statement regarding the stagnation of technological development in late 1941 as an attempt to fix the blame retrospectively on Udet. Even so, Udet--despite the fact that he had direct access to Goering--was technically subordinate to the State Secretary, and it would be manifestly unfair of the latter to try to make Udet entirely responsible for the collapse.[†]

After Udet's death, the State Secretary assumed responsibility for technical air armament and retained this responsibility until 1944, when it was transferred to the Chief of the General Staff--too late to avert the catastrophe.

It is difficult to understand the reasons for the State Secretary's hatred of the General Staff and its Chief. In the presence of the author, Goering once said to him,¹⁹ "Milch, you don't know what you're talking about! You're simply jealous of the General Staff because they wouldn't accept you when you tried to get in in 1917!"

* Editor's Note: The General Staff, of course, did have some measure of influence in that it was responsible for formulating tactical-technological requirements for the Luftwaffe.

† Editor's Note: The relationship between Milch and Udet--particularly the degree of subordination involved--requires further detailed study.

In view of Milch's desire for power and prestige, it may well be that this was the basis of his antipathy. Thwarted ambition is always a bad thing and it can become dangerous when the person concerned is given a position of power in which he can avenge his wounded feelings. There is no doubt that the disharmony existing between the State Secretary and the General Staff was one of the chief factors in the failure and final downfall of the German Luftwaffe.

Milch probably did the most damage through his decisive influence on the development and production of aircraft models. Here he often used his influence to counter the recommendations made by the General Staff, as the two examples given below will indicate. The following is an excerpt from a report by General Deichmann concerning the General Staff request for a four-engine bomber:²⁰

. . . Realizing that any future war would involve operations against targets lying in Russia, near and perhaps beyond the Ural Mountains, Luftwaffe leaders submitted a request for the development of a long-range bomber. In keeping with its contemplated employment, General Wever and his colleagues termed this model the "Ural bomber" both orally and in internal correspondence.

The technological requirements established for the Ural bomber were such as to enable it to reach the target indicated in its name.

Even at that early date, the Luftwaffe General Staff was firmly convinced that the standard bomber of the future would have to be a long-range machine.

The next few years of developmental work on bomber aircraft revealed clearly that the necessary technical performance could not be attained by a twin-engine bomber. Very soon thereafter, once Colonel Wimmer, at that time Chief of the Technical Office, had persuaded General Wever of the urgent need for a four-engine aircraft, the Luftwaffe General Staff amended its original request to encompass the larger airplane.

The initial research and developmental work was assigned to three separate aircraft manufacturing firms.

In 1937, after I had become Chief of Branch I, Operations, I learned that the Technical Office was planning to give up any further work on the four-engine bomber. Hereupon I requested permission to present my views on the subject to the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, Herman Goering. General der Flieger Milch also participated in the ensuing conference. I asked Goering to authorize further work on the bomber at all costs, pointing out that information received from abroad as well as the views of a number of recognized engineers indicated clearly that the performance of the four-engine bomber was expected to be so far superior to that attainable by a twin-engine machine that the four-engine aircraft would certainly develop into the air weapon of the future. I emphasized that the four-engine bomber was capable of a far greater flight range than could ever be developed for its twin-engine counterpart, and that the presumably remote targets involved in any future war could be reached only by a four-engine bomber. I continued, explaining that a four-engine bomber was capable of attaining a sufficiently high service altitude to keep it safely out of the range of antiaircraft artillery fire; its considerably greater carrying capacity would permit it to carry not only a greater number of bombs, but also heavier armor plating and more and better airborne armaments. Its higher speed would help to reduce its vulnerability to attack by enemy fighter aircraft.

General Milch interrupted, demanding to know where I had gotten all this information on the "fantastic" performance of the four-engine bomber. He told me that his own aeronautical engineers had come up with far less favorable prognoses. I replied that I was aware of the views held by this particular group of engineers within the Reichs Air Ministry, but that a considerable number of the engineers connected with the Technical Office were of quite a different opinion. The only way to determine which group was right was to let the developmental work continue. At this Milch declared that

all available industrial capacity was needed for the production of Ju-88's. I replied that during the course of my tour of the aircraft plants to inspect camouflage measures, several directors had assured me that they had both the space and the manpower to work on a four-engine bomber in addition to their other projects. Milch's rejoinder was that the men with whom I had spoken obviously were not aware of the full scope of the Ju-88 program.

In summary General Milch pointed out the following facts: 1) the much vaunted advantages of the four-engine bomber were far overrated, both in Germany and abroad; 2) what would be the point of its being able to fly at 32,800 feet? . . . according to statistics, in Germany the sky was overcast for so and so many days per year, so that it would be impossible to aim bombs from this altitude (I no longer recall the fantastically high number of days per year mentioned by Milch, but a subsequent check with the weather service revealed that he had exaggerated by 30-40%); our industrial capacity would permit a fleet of only 1,000 four-engine bombers, whereas several times that many twin-engine bombers could be produced; 4) the development of a four-engine bomber, even for limited production as test models, would endanger the Ju-88 program.

In reply I voiced the opinion that 1,000 four-engine bombers, whose longer range, greater speed, and higher degree of invulnerability to enemy attack would enable them to reach their targets safely, were of far more value than 10,000 twin-engine bombers which would probably be shot down by the enemy before reaching their destination. I begged Goering not to decide against the four-engine bomber without further evidence, but to let the developmental work on it continue.

Despite my pleas, Goering determined that work on the four-engine bomber should be dropped inasmuch as it might interfere with successful accomplishment of the Ju-88 program . . .

General Deichmann's report certainly refutes the charge that the Luftwaffe General Staff never made any definite request for the

development of a long-range bomber. The conference described above shows quite clearly that the General Staff had indeed taken the proper action, but that its request was deliberately scrapped by State Secretary Milch. Only a layman--and Goering was one--could base such a far-reaching decision on the flimsy arguments advanced by Milch. Milch's contention that the Ju-88 program would be endangered by the production of a few four-engine bombers for testing purposes is so utterly ridiculous that one is curious to know what the real reasons may have been. At any rate, it seems strange that Milch now labels Germany's failure to develop a four-engine bomber as a grave error on the part of Luftwaffe leaders and attempts to blame it on the reorganization which took place in Luftwaffe top-level command agencies in the summer of 1937.²¹

This was not the only instance in which Milch's interference had a detrimental effect on the Luftwaffe armament situation. Another case is also described by General Deichmann:²²

. . . Strangely enough, the Ju-52 transport aircraft had come to be the standard training aircraft for courses in the C group (multi-engine aircraft) as well as for courses in instrument navigation. This was understandable in the early years of Luftwaffe development, for the simple reason that there were no other aircraft models available. The retention of the Ju-52 in this capacity, however, was less comprehensible since it had three engines and a steering wheel, while all the other models used in the Luftwaffe had either one or two engines and stick control.

In the early months of the war the practice developed of borrowing the Ju-52's and the instructional personnel of the C Schools and Instrument Navigation Schools to take part in air transport operations. The aircraft which survived were returned several weeks later, some of them badly damaged; and the instructors killed in action were practically irreplaceable. As a result, the training of replacement crews for bomber and long-range reconnaissance units stagnated just at the time when such replacements were most urgently needed at the front.

In 1940, while I was Chief of Staff to the Chief of Training (after the campaign in Poland), I took advantage of a conference with Goering to suggest to him that the Ju-86 be adopted to replace the Ju-52 as a training aircraft. The Ju-86 was a twin-engine bomber with a crude oil engine and had been introduced in a number of bomber units shortly before the war. Since the crude oil engine had not proved entirely satisfactory, and since newer, faster models had become available, the Ju-86 was no longer being used at the front. It would have taken only a few man-hours to adapt the Ju-86 as a trainer by installing double controls and a second instrument panel. By replacing the crude oil engine with a gasoline engine, the Ju-86--with its highly satisfactory flight characteristics--could be made into an ideal training machine. There was one disadvantage involved in the conversion from crude oil to gasoline: the fuel tanks, of course, had been constructed for crude oil and would hold only enough gasoline to keep the aircraft aloft for one and a half hours; however, I did not feel that this was a serious obstacle to its use as a trainer. Moreover, auxiliary fuel tanks could be installed in the wings without any difficulty. Another thing in its favor was the fact that large supplies of the necessary raw materials were available, since its removal from the armament program had come as a surprise. A single small aircraft plant could easily have produced the quantity needed for the C Schools.

Field Marshal Milch, who was also present at the conference, objected strongly to my recommendation, ostensibly on the grounds that the Ju-88 program required every bit of available industrial capacity. He explained that the new aircraft procurement program called for the production of eighty Ju-52's per month, which would easily be enough to meet front requirements for transport aircraft as well as the needs of the schools. He brushed aside my objection that the needs of the front in transport aircraft were practically unlimited. Goering decided against my suggestion. The only concession I was able to obtain was the promise that control of the distribution of all Ju-52 aircraft would be given to the

Chief of Training. In this way, he could at least see that the schools had sufficient training aircraft.

It is a well-known fact that the practice of requisitioning Ju-52's from the training schools continued unabated and, in fact, became more and more common as the war progressed. As a result, of course, the schools were simply unable to fulfill their mission of providing trained replacement personnel for the bomber and long-range reconnaissance forces.

The Battle of Britain provided the earliest indication of the catastrophic consequences of Goering's decision.

In this instance, too, it is obvious that Milch deliberately sabotaged an excellent suggestion with flimsy arguments. Milch was not so foolish that he could have failed to see the advantages to be gained by adopting this suggestion. One can only assume that he turned it down so vehemently in order to impress Goering, who, of course, had no idea of the issue involved, with his own superiority to the General Staff officer. The fact that he could do such a thing without taking the possible effects into account throws rather a revealing light on his character and on his attitude towards the General Staff.

During Jeschonnek's period of service as Chief of the General Staff, the relationship between Milch and the General Staff grew noticeably more and more difficult. In a questionnaire dated 2 September 1955,²³ Milch gives his reasons as follows:

. . . This is the way it happened. One day I received a report from the Training Wing that an airplane had crashed on the water; the machine had gotten out of control in a low dive over the Bach.^{*} The next day two more machines, with

*Translator's Note: Bach (stream) is Luftwaffe jargon for ocean; in this particular case, it refers to the Baltic Sea bay off the shore from Greifswald.

their crews, were reported missing for the same reason. I requested copies of the orders and in them I read the following sentence: 'In practising low-altitude flight, the pilot should make certain that the propeller tips touch the water.' It was reported to me that the comment 'Anyone who doesn't do it this way is a coward!' was added orally.

I now faced the decision of whether or not to initiate court martial proceedings against Jeschonnek. I decided against it, however, and gave him a severe reprimand instead. From this moment on, he was my deadly enemy. If I had gone ahead with court martial proceedings, he could have been sentenced to several years' imprisonment. Ambition and vanity are the basic causes of his enmity towards me. Incidentally, only a man with no experience whatsoever in technical matters could have issued the orders he did.

In the same questionnaire, Milch had the following to say regarding the effects of Jeschonnek's attitude towards him:

. . . The only time I took Goering's place during the war was in the winter of 1940-41, when he went on leave. At that time I spent about two months at his headquarters near Beauvais, in France. The day I arrived, Jeschonnek took off for Karinhall. His orders were transmitted by telephone to von Waldau . . .

Goering did nothing to ease the tension between his two chief colleagues. On the contrary, he did his best to stir up friction between them in order to keep them from joining forces against himself. In this respect he was following in the footsteps of his lord and master, even though he may not have been consciously aware of it. Hitler, too, was a past master in the art of sowing the seeds of dissension in such a way as to keep the political leaders, the Party, and the Armed Forces continually at each others' throats and thus too divided to represent a real danger to him.

Section V: Friction within the Luftwaffe General Staff

In the early days, under Wever, Kesselring, and Stumpff,

there was no internal friction of note within the Luftwaffe General Staff. There were occasional differences of opinion, of course, as is the case in any group of intelligent individuals, but these were never of such nature as to give rise to lasting tensions. The first situation of a more serious nature arose in early 1939, when Luftwaffe leaders were requested to submit their plans for a so-called Fuehrer Program. This program called for the rapid expansion of the Luftwaffe on a scale far beyond any practical possibility.

General Kammhuber--at that time Chief of the Organization Staff--describes the conference on the Fuehrer Program and its effects in a report dated 11 October 1954:²⁴

. . . On 6 December 1938, Goering relayed to us Hitler's order that we begin work on a new Fuehrer Program for the Luftwaffe. I, that is to say, the Organization Staff of the Reichs Air Ministry, was to be responsible for planning in this connection. I was to have the help of all the office chiefs and of several specially designated branch chiefs in the Ministry.

After a week's discussion with the various office chiefs, I had reached the conclusion that the Fuehrer Program was of such tremendous scope that we simply did not have either the materiel or the personnel necessary to accomplish it within the foreseeable future. For this reason I set up an alternative program of lesser scope, which we termed the Kammhuber Program.

During the first week of January 1939, Milch called a meeting of the office chiefs of the Reichs Air Ministry in order to discuss the Kammhuber Program. Without exception, all of the chiefs (including Stumpff, Chief of the General Staff) disapproved the Fuehrer Program because it required far too much. Most of them however, also disapproved of the Kammhuber Program for the same reason, although it represented only about one-third of the Fuehrer Program in scope.

After the discussion, before Milch and I left to report the

results to Goering, Milch asked once more whether all those present were agreed that the Fuehrer Program should be dropped and the Kammhuber Program adopted in its place. Hereupon Jeschonnek rose and stated that he, as Chief of the Operations Staff, was not in favor of dropping the Fuehrer Program. Milch then took Jeschonnek with him to see Goering, and when they came back after about half an hour, the final decision had been made--the Fuehrer Program was adopted, although its realization was entirely out of the question. It did not occur to anyone to report this last fact to the Fuehrer.

Soon thereafter General Stumpff was transferred to another assignment, and Colonel Jeschonnek was named Chief of the General Staff.

The events described by Kammhuber above probably constituted the first instance of real tension within the General Staff. By placing himself at variance with the soundly considered views of his colleagues and future subordinates, Jeschonnek had chosen his course for the future. This course led him farther and farther away from the solid ground of facts and closer and closer to mere speculation. His first step was not calculated to make his subordinates follow him with willing confidence as they had followed his predecessors.

This basic lack of confidence could not be bridged entirely even by the extraordinary successes of the Luftwaffe during the early period of Jeschonnek's incumbency. His uncritical devotion to Hitler was often a matter of worry to the older and more experienced officers on the General Staff. It was for this reason that he much preferred to surround himself with younger colleagues and did his best to see that Goering's inner circle was also made up of younger men. We have already discussed Jeschonnek's patronage of younger officers and have indicated that it was one of the factors which was later to make his own position so difficult. General von Seidel, the former Quartermaster General of the Luftwaffe, makes the following comments on this general situation and its consequences:²⁵

. . . His successor as General Staff Chief was Jeschonnek,

who took office on 1 February 1939. At this time Jeschonnek was forty years of age, persona grata with Goering and persona gratissima with Hitler, at least until 1942-43. In the beginning, he also managed to keep Milch (with whom he had served as a young General Staff officer in 1933-34) pretty much on his side, although later the two became the bitterest of adversaries. Jeschonnek was too young and possessed too little knowledge of human nature to master his assignment, and he had too little inner strength to keep from being overwhelmed by it in the end. A man of quick intelligence, with the ability to pick out the essential factors of a military problem and a talent for presenting them concisely and clearly orally or in writing, Jeschonnek had no other interests outside his profession; he had no first-hand knowledge of other nations and their way of life. He was a man of few and simple personal wants, youthful in appearance and behavior and fired by ambition. A National Socialist to the core and deeply devoted to Hitler personally, this man was to guide the fortunes of the Luftwaffe for several long years. Although his name is justly associated with the victories enjoyed by the Luftwaffe during the early blitz campaigns, no objective appraisal of his career can ignore the fact that his abject acceptance of Hitler's leadership and the awkward position he occupied between the latter and Goering after 1941 (largely his own fault) were factors which contributed much to the defeat and final collapse of the Luftwaffe. Moreover, the young aides and advisors (particularly in connection with technological matters) with whom he surrounded himself--all of them were as immature as Jeschonnek and most of them were far less scrupulous than he in their all-consuming ambition--had no qualms about indulging in behind-the-scenes intrigues, and were certainly much to blame for the final catastrophe. The names Christian,* Diesing, and Storp stand out particularly in this connection. In my own opinion (which is based chiefly on the first and only long conversation I ever had with Jeschonnek (in July 1943), during which he dropped

* Editor's Note: Generalmajor Eckhard Christian.

the rigid mask of a soldier and revealed the more personal aspects of his character), before he suffered the nervous collapse which resulted in his suicide, Jeschonnek had come to the clear realization that he himself was in part responsible for the defeat of the Luftwaffe, and he knew that the war was already lost . . .

Even among Jeschonnek's more intimate colleagues, however, the atmosphere was not completely free of tension. In 1940 he appointed his friend, General Hoffman von Waldau, one of the most brilliant General Staff officers of the Luftwaffe, to the post of Chief of the Luftwaffe Operations Staff. This appointment was not only the beginning of the end of their long-standing friendship, but also marked the beginning of a period of rankling tension between the two men in connection with their professional duties. General von Seidel²⁶ presents the following picture of the relationship between Jeschonnek and von Waldau:

. . . Von Waldau, originally a good friend of Jeschonnek's, was a General Staff officer of greater than average ability. A man of sound and sensible views, he evaluated the potential development and employment of the Luftwaffe objectively and was well aware of the dangers of military involvement with the Western Powers. I should like to relate the following incident as characteristic of him: One evening, several weeks before the war began, we were driving home together from the Reichs Air Ministry. As we drove across the Grosser Stern (square in Berlin) with its victory monument overlooking the east-west axis of the city, Waldau suddenly asked me whether I thought we would ever live to see the day when this square would be called Square of the Red Army. Waldau's clarity of vision, his objective evaluation of Germany's top leaders, the military situation, and the inevitable outcome of the war, and his unconcealed impatience with Jeschonnek's role as yes-man to Hitler and Goering gradually led him into the disfavor of Jeschonnek and Goering. In early 1942, he was relieved of his assignment in the Ministry and transferred to Africa as Commanding General of the X Air Corps. Shortly thereafter

he met his death in an airplane crash in the Balkans. His personal notebooks, which he kept in the form of a war diary,* are one of our most valuable sources for the historical evaluation of the events of his time. A staff and field officer of unusual ability, a man of outstanding character and with all the qualities of a gentleman, von Waldau's death was a grave loss to the Luftwaffe. As far as my own work was concerned, von Waldau had always shown sincere understanding for the problems and tasks of the quartermaster branch and for its importance to the Luftwaffe as a whole, and I could always count on his full and willing cooperation.

In comparison with his successors, most of whom were industrious office workers and yes-men without an idea of their own, von Waldau had proved himself to be extremely capable as Chief of the Operations Staff. Both Goering and Jeschonnek flatly refused to attend his funeral in Saloniki!

Branch V (Intelligence) was one of the most important branches of the General Staff. This branch was responsible for compiling the information needed by the Chief of the General Staff and the top-level command of the Luftwaffe for the day-to-day conduct of the air war and for presenting a daily situation report. This report was to provide the Chief of the General Staff with accurate information on the air situation of the moment as well as on the over-all situation and thus to furnish a background for his daily conferences with the Commander in Chief and the Fuehrer. These situation reports were then studied carefully to determine armament requirements for the Luftwaffe and to plan for its future employment. Thus, it is clear that a great deal depended upon the work of this branch; its conclusions and recommendations could have a decisive effect on major events of the war. General-leutnant Schmid, who served as Chief of Branch V for many years, describes the attitude of the Chief of the General Staff and the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, towards the work of his branch:²⁷

* Editor's Note: An English translation and a copy of the German original are both available in H/I/1, Karlsruhe Document Collection.

. . . As soon as the tide began to turn against Germany-- with the crisis in the East, America's entry into the war, and the increased bombardment of German cities by the Royal Air Force--, Goering's relationship to his General Staff Chief and his Chief of Intelligence (i. e., Branch V) became more and more tense. The reason for this was the unwillingness of Branch V to depart from its tradition of objective evaluation of information.

Intelligence Reports. Unfavorable reports submitted by intelligence officers at the front were simply dismissed as inaccurate. On the other hand it was rather embarrassing for us to have to correct the exaggerated reports of successes sent in by certain corps.

Evaluation of Conditions Abroad. Our reports on the development and expansion of the Russian Air Force during the campaign in the East were interpreted as an expression of a 'defeatist attitude on the part of Branch V.' We were unable to convince Luftwaffe leaders of the tremendous capacity for armament production in Soviet Russia. Our evaluation of the significance for Russia of the supply routes via Archangel, the Far East, and the Persian Gulf was brushed aside as inconsequential.

The recovery of the British aircraft industry and the establishment of a four-engine bomber fleet in England were considered unimportant. Countless oral reports and written memoranda dealing with the American armament program went entirely unnoticed. Our reports on the establishment of a huge American fleet of four-engine bombers, on the first appearance of American aircraft in England and Africa, and on the construction of a large number of airfields in Great Britain (air reconnaissance over Britain had been all but discontinued because of the efficacy of the British fighter aircraft defense; thus we had no aerial photographs to present in support of the last contention)--all of which were of the greatest importance in planning the future conduct of the war--were

not only doubted but held up to ridicule.

Our reports regarding the number of British aircraft appearing over Germany at night were not believed. The importance which the Chief of Intelligence had attributed to the attache service was dismissed as grossly exaggerated, and the traditional attache conferences, which admittedly took these people away from their posts temporarily, were severely criticized. Those memoranda submitted by the attaches and reporting on the dissatisfaction of Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, and Turkey at the small amount of German support they were receiving wandered into the wastebasket, and the attaches were told to omit all references to political matters from their reports in the future.

Finally, when the Chief of Intelligence dared to confirm-- by means of a detailed report and several diagrams--a statement made by Churchill to the Lower House to the effect that England had employed a force of 1000 aircraft in a night raid on Cologne, his 'defeatist attitude and tendency to theorize' were proved beyond any doubt. The Fuehrer and his immediate staff arbitrarily termed all reports coming from Branch V 'reports of lies.' By this time none of us really enjoyed our work any longer. In addition the Chief of the General Staff ordered that the personnel strength of the Intelligence Branch be reduced to a minimum in order to cut down the 'pointless evaluations of conditions abroad' and to do away with the reports 'which made such unpleasant reading.' It was time for a change and it was not long before the opportunity presented itself.

The irresponsible casualness with which the Chief of the General Staff, Hitler, and Goering treated the carefully prepared reports on conditions abroad is a clear indication of the arrogant and criminal optimism with which they led an entire nation to ruin. It is understandable that clear-thinking General Staff officers, particularly the older ones, were unable to share this optimism, especially if they were familiar with the over-all picture and acquainted with the

methods employed by the top-level military leaders. Although open disagreements were avoided, Jeschonnek was simply incapable of maintaining that feeling of trust and confidence which had bound the General Staff officers to their former chiefs. As far as the rest of the Luftwaffe was concerned, the well-known Fuehrer Directive No. 1 prevented most people from catching a glimpse of the over-all situation.

When Jeschonnek took over the office of Chief of Branch I, Operations from Colonel Deichmann, an unusually able and far-seeing officer, a rather heated argument developed between the two men regarding the problem of the four-engine bomber; Jeschonnek's behavior on this occasion does not do him honor. General Deichmann's report of the incident is given below:²⁸

. . . In the fall of 1937, when I was relieved of my assignment as Chief of Branch I, Operations of the General Staff, I brought up the matter of the four-engine bomber to my successor, Colonel Jeschonnek.

After I had officially turned over the office to him, I explained that there was one recommendation I would like to make concerning a matter which I felt to be of extremely great importance. This was the development and production of a four-engine bomber, which the Reichsmarschall had already disapproved. I explained that we had had such excellent reports on the potentialities of this aircraft model that I was personally convinced that we ought to start producing it in quantity as soon as possible.

Colonel Jeschonnek replied that he was of an entirely different opinion. He reminded me that I myself had written a memorandum concerning the conduct of strategic air warfare in which I had stated that the important thing was to destroy the vital part of a target, using the smallest possible number of aircraft and bombs. In illustration of this point, I had pointed out that a single direct hit in the boiler house of a large industrial plant could paralyze it completely. Further

I had stated that such pin-point bombing was impossible from an aircraft flying horizontally at high altitude; what we needed was a dive-bomber, which could approach the target closely and in comparative safety.

He went on to say that we now had what we needed in the Ju-88.

At this point I called his attention to the fact that the really important targets in any future war would probably lie considerably farther away, and that, as far as I knew, the Ju-88 did not possess the necessary flight range. Besides, no aircraft built chiefly for diving performance was capable of developing the speed needed to escape attack by enemy fighter aircraft.

Hereupon Colonel Jeschonnek refused to discuss the matter with me any further, stating that all my arguments were based on theoretical speculation. He, on the other hand, as the former Commanding Officer of the Training Wing, had had practical experience with the Ju-88, and he felt that it was the most suitable model to serve as the standard bomber of the Luftwaffe!

Under Jeschonnek's successors in the General Staff Chief's post, there seem to have been no important instances of internal tension within the General Staff. We might perhaps make mention of the attempt made by a number of younger officers from the General Staff and from the front to force an ultimatum on Goering and his General Staff Chief, General Koller. Driven into a corner, the Reichsmarschall had no choice but to agree to the suggestion made by Lt. Col. Werner Baumbach, the well-known bomber pilot, that he should meet with these younger officers for an informal conference at Gatow, near Berlin. At this meeting the officers were to have the opportunity to express their opinions frankly and to make recommendations regarding the organization of the top-level command of the Luftwaffe. During several days of discussion this officer group, known

within the Luftwaffe as the Reichsmarschall's "Aeropag,"* gave vent to its pent-up feeling of discontent and finally presented a formal recommendation for certain changes within the Luftwaffe top-level command organization. They requested the removal of the General Staff Chief, General Koller, suggested a successor, and recommended that the responsibilities attached to the post be modified. (If their suggestion had been followed, the General Staff Chief would have been no more than an administrative office-boy.) They suggested that they themselves be placed in charge of Luftwaffe operations as a kind of collective operations staff. The General Staff Chief sent an information copy of the recommendation to the author for study. For an older and experienced officer, their suggestion contained a good many discrepancies, some of them exceedingly amusing, and showed clearly just how the man in the street imagined the top-level command of the Luftwaffe to be--and this despite the fact that Generalleutnant Adolf Galland and Peltz were among the officers responsible for it. The details of this suggestion are no longer known, but in any case, the Reichsmarschall passed it along to the Chief of the General Staff as a "worthwhile recommendation" and requested the latter to study it and consider ways and means of putting it into effect. Once the General Staff Chief and his colleagues were able to prove to Goering that the recommendations were unfeasible (by means of rather primitive examples--the only ones Goering could understand), the Aeropag suggestions took their place in the wastebasket.

Even though the incident related above is not a direct example of tension within the General Staff itself, it is symptomatic for the over-all situation at that time and is a typical example of the sort of problem on which the Chief of the General Staff had to spend time much better used for more constructive purposes.

Section VI: The Influence of the General Staff on Important Problems of the Luftwaffe

It was inherent in the status and mission of the Luftwaffe

* Translator's Note: "Aeropag" is apparently the Luftwaffe version of the Greek Areopag (a court of justice).

General Staff that it should exert an influence on all important problems connected with the Luftwaffe. In the chapter dealing with organization we have already seen that the degree of authority possessed by the Chief of the General Staff was subject to several changes at various times, and his ability to influence important decisions quite naturally varied with his authority. In the fields of operational command, organization, and training the prerogatives of the General Staff were never seriously challenged except on those occasions when the cliques around Hitler, Goering, or Milch attempted to interfere.

The influence of the General Staff on the development of the Luftwaffe was greatest under its first Chief, General Wever. It was due primarily to his initiative and energy that the Luftwaffe was able to develop from scratch into a powerful striking instrument within the space of a few years. Goering was responsible for setting the ultimate goal; it was the Chief of the General Staff who planned and carried out the difficult task of reaching that goal, a uniquely admirable accomplishment.

Selection of Aircraft

In the foregoing chapters we have seen that General Wever was desirous of establishing a Luftwaffe which would be capable of meeting the requirements set by the Italian General Douhet for the conduct of a successful air war. Thus he deliberately placed the emphasis on the creation of a strong bomber force. Both he and his colleagues felt sure that a long-range bomber would be indispensable in case of a war with Soviet Russia, and it was due to Wever's initiative that three firms were set to work on the development of a four-engine machine. It is obvious today that the Luftwaffe would have profited tremendously if this developmental work had been carried to its conclusion. After Wever's death, as we have already mentioned, Milch succeeded in persuading Goering to order this work stopped.

Jeschonnek was the next General Staff Chief to have any influence on the aircraft models used by the Luftwaffe. On the basis of his experience as commander of the Training Wing, he supported

the production of a dive-bomber capable of pinpoint bombing. The model which seemed most suitable to him for this purpose was the Ju-88. Today it is well known that the Ju-88 never fulfilled the hopes placed upon it in respect to diving ability, yet because it was built primarily for diving performance, the other qualities which might have made it an efficient aircraft model, i. e. speed, flight range, and carrying capacity, were more or less ignored.

Because of Jeschonnek's misguided decision to push the Ju-88, his own views on the conduct of strategic air warfare changed, and the Luftwaffe became a primarily tactical instrument. The extraordinary successes which it enjoyed in this role in the beginning of the war disguised the fact that Jeschonnek's decision had been wrong. Later on, during the Battle of Britain and during the Russian campaign, the effects of Jeschonnek's mistake became painfully apparent.

Air Defense

Air defense was another area in which the General Staff was able to exercise a decisive influence. In this case, however, Jeschonnek's complete lack of understanding for the importance of air defense had catastrophic consequences for Germany. Even after it had become obvious that Germany's air offensive against England was doomed to failure by the efficacy of Britain's excellently trained and equipped fighter aircraft defense units, Jeschonnek refused to press for increased production of fighter aircraft for home air defense operations; and this despite the available reports concerning the establishment of ever more and ever larger bomber units by the Allies. State Secretary Milch, responsible for air armament, foresaw coming developments more clearly than Jeschonnek, and offered on several occasions to increase the production of fighter aircraft. Jeschonnek, however, consistently refused his offers, a reaction which seems incomprehensible now.

Air Transport

One of the most serious errors made by Jeschonnek while he

was Chief of the General Staff was to permit the air transport units to continue plundering the pilot training schools.

The air transport units had the misfortune to be assigned to operations which not only exceeded their materiel and personnel strength, but which also entailed high losses (Norway, Crete, Africa, and Stalingrad, to mention but a few of their assignments). As a result, new units were continually being activated in a hopeless attempt to catch up with previous losses. Unfortunately, the pilot training schools--and particularly the instrument navigation schools--were the only source from which the necessary personnel could be drawn. Since Jeschonnek refused to change his policy of horizontal expansion in spite of the objections brought forward by his Organization Staff, the personnel reserve in flying crews, already dangerously small, became even smaller.

The ultimate effect during the last years of the war was total inadequacy, both in quantity and in quality, in the replacement program for flying personnel. Citing the blitzkrieg principle,* Jeschonnek refused to listen to objections or warnings.

Tactical vs. Strategic Air Warfare

Jeschonnek's successor, General Korten, did his best to stop the involuntary development of the Luftwaffe into a purely tactical instrument. In the winter of 1943-44 he requested the withdrawal of the IV Air Corps from operations in the East in order that it might be prepared for strategic operations against Soviet Russian industrial targets.

Although his request was approved, General Korten's plan was

* Translator's Note: The blitzkrieg principle was that of the short-term war, in which decisive victory was gained by the first force committed, thereby obviating the necessity for replacements.

invalidated by the loss of a base from which to carry out strategic raids; by the spring of 1944 the really important targets were out of range of the available aircraft. Moreover, because of the critical situation on the Eastern front, Hitler ordered the commitment of all available forces against the Soviet offensive. With this, the last attempt to shift to strategic air warfare was ended, and it seemed that the role of the Luftwaffe, the force which had been founded on such great hopes, was to remain that of an auxiliary force for the Army, destined to be employed in any critical area like a fire brigade to help to relieve the ground situation as Hitler saw fit.

The most important instances in which the top-level command of the Luftwaffe had any decisive influence on the over-all course of the war were the decisions to use the Luftwaffe to destroy the British forces at Dunkirk and to supply Generaloberst Paulus' Sixth Army at Stalingrad. Although it was Goering himself who provided the initial impetus and who announced the Luftwaffe's readiness to carry out these two undertakings, the Chief of the General Staff cannot escape a share of the blame for the final results. He ought to have exhausted every means at his disposal to keep Goering from making these commitments.

Section VII: The Relationship of the Luftwaffe General Staff to the Troops

The character of the relationship between the Luftwaffe General Staff and the Luftwaffe troop units was determined primarily by the first two General Staff Chiefs, Wever and Kesselring. To a far greater extent than any of their successors, these two men took advantage of every opportunity to visit the troop units during the early years of Luftwaffe development, to obtain an accurate picture of their difficulties and their needs, to provide relief whenever they could, and to gather suggestions and recommendations in practical questions for evaluation and possible application in their work at the Ministry. Their extremely close contact with the troops gave birth to a feeling of mutual trust and confidence, which was fully maintained during the peacetime years. The awareness of a common goal and a common task and the knowledge that command and troops were mutually

dependent upon one another's cooperation in order to reach that goal--a goal familiar to each and every member of the Luftwaffe--helped to create a close bond between the two. The traditional prestige of the General Staff and the recognized ability of its top members were sufficient to give it the necessary authority as long as it performed its task of leadership with integrity and objectivity.

In 1937, when the internal rivalry between the State Secretary and the Chief of the General Staff occupied the latter to such an extent that he was unable to maintain the close contact with the troops which his predecessors had established, a slight, barely noticeable coolness began to undermine the relationship between Staff and troops; this coolness was intensified by the rumors of internal strife at top-level which involuntarily--or perhaps voluntarily, as far as the State Secretary was concerned--filtered down to the level of the troop staffs. The latter, of course, were all on the side of the General Staff, which they recognized to be the traditionally proper and professionally capable agency of top-level command. Whatever doubts may have arisen during this period regarding the integrity of top-level leadership were completely dispelled, however, in early 1939, when Jeschonnek, a young officer who was generally recognized as a man of great ability by the troops, took office as Chief of the General Staff. During his period of service as commander of the Training Wing, Jeschonnek had gained a reputation as a man of tremendous practical ability and as the officer responsible for the development of most of the principles of employment followed by the Luftwaffe. The troops confidently expected that he would make his influence felt as Chief of the General Staff, and that he would give new impetus to the development and expansion of the Luftwaffe.

Since the older General Staff officers were, almost without exception, men of obviously superior ability in general military affairs as well as in those questions specifically applicable to the Luftwaffe, their right to a position of prestige (and a uniform illustrating this position) and to preferential promotions was accepted by the troop staffs and the troops themselves without further question.

It was not until the war began, or, more precisely, during its

early stages, that the relationship between the General Staff officers and the troops began to change perceptibly. One of the main reasons for this change lay in Goering's refusal to let his General Staff Chief visit the troop units during wartime lest they be tempted to give the major part of their personal allegiance to the General Staff Chief rather than to Goering himself. Inevitably, of course, this made it difficult for the Chief of the General Staff to procure an accurate picture of the conditions obtaining among the troop units, and also gradually decreased the feeling of closeness between the Staff and the troops. Moreover, the burden of work within the Luftwaffe General Staff itself and within the higher-level field staffs was so great, and the available staff so limited in number, that there was no longer time to maintain the close relationship which had prevailed during peacetime. As a result, the gap between the two finally became so great that the General Staff occasionally issued orders so unrealistic as to cause the troops to doubt the military ability of that body. This sort of situation can develop very rapidly during wartime when the soldier at the front is forced to assert his independence of thinking in order to meet enemy attack and is encouraged, by the praise he receives for successful operations, to consider his self-assertiveness justifiable under all circumstances. Inevitably the soldier at the front has a certain feeling of superiority over the staff officer who has not experienced enemy action, and this feeling--whether it is justified or not--is bound to lead to criticism of the work of higher-level staffs.

This situation was aggravated by the continuing personnel shortage, which made it quite impossible to assign General Staff officers to alternate periods of staff and combat duty. Gradually, the gap between the General Staff and the troops became so great that it could no longer be bridged and the troops began to lose their traditional respect for the members of the General Staff.

One of the chief factors contributing to the loss of prestige of the General Staff among the troop units was the shortening of the General Staff training--made necessary by a critical lack of qualified instructional personnel. The courses at the War Academy became shorter and shorter, and the knowledge and ability of the younger generation of General Staff officers did not always justify their often

overweening self-confidence. True, they had distinguished themselves in action, but their training for leadership was woefully incomplete. Most of them attached no importance to the principle that they should "be more than they appeared to be," and the suddenness with which they took their places in the command apparatus usually precluded their ultimately becoming useful members of it. In order to compensate for their lack of decorations (which, although given very freely in combat, were rarely considered appropriate for members of the General Staff), certain individual officers were no doubt tempted to point with undue pride at the crimson stripe on their trousers as tangible evidence of a superior mental endowment, and this quite naturally annoyed the troop units.

We must admit in all fairness that these individuals were the exception rather than the rule, but unfortunately the repercussions of their behavior were often greater than the incidents themselves warranted. On the whole, however, their influence on the over-all relationship between Staff and troops was not great.

A far greater obstacle to the maintenance of a feeling of confidence were the errors of judgment committed by top-level command and the frequent impasses, especially in the armament question, created by the rivalry between the State Secretary and the General Staff. The troops, who were accustomed to the tradition of the General Staff as the sole responsible instrument of command, were naturally inclined to attribute any and all errors to tension and incompetence within the General Staff itself. Not having the opportunity to become acquainted with the situation behind the scenes, they understandably placed the responsibility for the results of any wrong decision on that agency of command most clearly in evidence, i. e. on the General Staff. And the group of men which had crystallized around Goering and Milch, most of them bitter enemies of the General Staff, took pains to encourage this view during their frequent inspection visits to the troop units. A serious crisis in the relationship between Staff and troops would have certainly occurred if the troops themselves--down to the smallest unit--had not become aware during the course of the war of the dilletantism and incompetence of their Commander in Chief and State Secretary.

The last Chief of the Operations Branch of the Luftwaffe General Staff, Colonel Kurt von Greiff, comments as follows on the relationship between the General Staff and the troop units:²⁹

. . . It happened frequently that the General Staff, in its capacity as the instrument of command, was forced to issue orders demanding more than the troops were in a position to accomplish easily. It was then the responsibility of the General Staff officer to justify these orders to the troops although he himself might not be convinced of their necessity or be even aware of the real reason for them, limited as he was to a knowledge of his own particular field of endeavor or to the particular theater of operations for which he was responsible. It is understandable that criticism of command became more and more intense as the war neared its end, since the troops inevitably tended to blame the command organization for anything that went wrong.

Inasmuch as the troops had no way of knowing what was going on behind the scenes, and since criticism of the top political leaders was out of the question in an authoritarian state, it was natural that the General Staff came in for most of the blame. Undesirable as this situation was, however, it cannot be said that it had any real influence on the relationship between the General Staff and the troops.

Section VIII: The Relationship of the Luftwaffe General Staff to the General Staffs of the Army and Navy

The older officers on the Luftwaffe General Staff had the greatest influence on the development of the Luftwaffe. They had come, without exception, from the Army General Staff. Thus it was quite natural that the organizational structure, the procedures, and the mental outlook of the Luftwaffe General Staff were closely akin to those of the Army General Staff. Moreover, the Chiefs of the Luftwaffe General Staff who had also served as General Staff officers in the Army were fully recognized by their Army colleagues as men of

integrity and ability. Thus they provided a personal guarantee for a smooth and mutually confident relationship between the two staffs. The rest of the older generation of Luftwaffe General Staff officers had completed their staff training with their counterparts on the Army General Staff, and the many personal friendships going back to the days of their academy training made for smooth and comradely cooperation.

We cannot deny that this generally harmonious relationship was disturbed by a certain amount of discord right from the beginning; however, this had no effect on the genuine professional recognition which each Staff felt for the other. The reasons for the sporadic instances of disharmony were largely psychological in nature. We have already pointed out that the attitudes of the Army General Staff were fairly conservative, in keeping with its traditional position of prestige in the eyes of the Armed Forces and the nation as a whole; a position won by the Army's performance during past wars and by the accomplishments of its outstanding Chiefs. From a psychological point of view, it is quite understandable that the members of the Army General Staff Corps were unenthusiastic at the prospect of sharing their prestige with the General Staff of a completely new force, a force, moreover, which--in their opinion--ought to have been a subordinate element of the Army.

Protected by the influence of an all-powerful Minister and Commander in Chief, the young Luftwaffe General Staff had almost complete freedom of action and was frequently in a position to push through its requests in spite of the expressed disapproval of the Army; understandably, the Army's top leaders as well as individual members of the Army General Staff Corps were somewhat less than enthusiastic. Whereas the Army was jealously determined to maintain its position of prestige within the Armed Forces and was reluctant to espouse new and untried principles of warfare, from the very beginning the Luftwaffe General Staff was firm in its contention that the Luftwaffe, as a new branch of the Armed Forces, had a right to equal status within that body, and that the new weapon represented the beginning of a new era in the waging of war.

Thus, the Luftwaffe General Staff made requests and demands

which, by their very nature, elicited professional objections from the Army. Furthermore, cooperation was made difficult by the difference in perspective which characterized the goals of the two branches. In its operational planning, the Army still thought in terms of a war limited to the Continent, while the Luftwaffe, from its very inception, was forced to think internationally.

Whereas the Chief of the Army General Staff, Generaloberst Beck, was the prototype of the cautious, thoughtful, and conservative General Staff officer, those officers who left the Army and Navy to join the Luftwaffe General Staff, and particularly the ones who later served as Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff, were far more modern in their thinking and far more receptive to the potentialities of modern technology.

The Army claimed to be the decisive branch of the Armed Forces, with the traditional right to force its conceptions on the other branches; while the Luftwaffe General Staff was of the opinion that war could be waged successfully only if the operations of all three branches were carefully coordinated and that the Luftwaffe, once its development had reached its completion, would inevitably become the decisive branch. This difference of opinions shows clearly that the concept of a common agency of command for all three Armed Forces branches was well along the way to acceptance in the Luftwaffe, at least in the General Staff of the Luftwaffe. In contrast, the Army General Staff members were still very much divided on this question. The Luftwaffe General Staff strongly supported the establishment of a joint military academy, whose courses, however, finally had to be discontinued because the Army declared itself unable to spare the students long enough for them to complete training. Thus this attempt to create an over-all Armed Forces General Staff, or at least to make sure that each individual General Staff would have officers who had had training in all three fields, had to be abandoned; neither Hitler nor the Armed Forces High Command was willing to give the plan any support.

During the early years of the Luftwaffe, a certain feeling of discontent developed among the younger Army General Staff officers

because of the Luftwaffe's policy of rapid promotion. The reasons for this policy had been subjected to very careful considerations, and its purpose--the development of the relatively small group of General Staff officers in the Luftwaffe into an officer corps large enough to meet the requirements of its continuing expansion--was thoroughly justifiable. The resultant discrepancy in rank between Luftwaffe officers and officers of the same age on the Army General Staff, however, did not contribute very much to the popularity of the former, whom many viewed as upstarts. This tendency was further aggravated by the fact that the Luftwaffe officer corps, even within the General Staff, was rather heterogeneous, an additional reason for the Army General Staff to feel justified in viewing the newcomers with a certain degree of condescension.

During the course of the last few years before the war, these difficulties had been fairly well smoothed over, so that they were no longer apparent to outsiders or in the internal relationship between the two staffs. Occasional instances of petty rivalry were relegated to the background by the common anxiety over political developments and the security of the nation. Once the war began, all differences ceased to exist and the relationship between the two staffs was dictated exclusively by the exigencies of war. Apart from a few minor exceptions, official cooperation between the two was exemplary. One important factor in this connection was the extraordinary military success of the Luftwaffe in joint operations with the Army--a success which far exceeded the Army's most optimistic expectations. The reputation thus established by the Luftwaffe during the early phases of the war proved to have such a lasting effect that even in the later phases, when Luftwaffe support for ground operations was all but completely discontinued, the relationship between the two General Staffs suffered little change. The Army was also fully aware of the fact that the collapse of the Luftwaffe could not be blamed entirely on the Luftwaffe General Staff, for the errors made at top level were no less apparent to the Army than to the Luftwaffe.

In Section III of Chapter 5 we have already discussed in detail the internal relationship between the Army and the Luftwaffe General Staff officers serving with Luftwaffe elements attached to the Army.

We know of no instance during the war in which this relationship was subjected to any serious frictions or disrupting differences in opinion.

The fact that cooperation at this level was so smooth was due in large part to the clear and detailed delineation of authority and guidelines contained in the "Handbook of General Staff Service in Wartime," discussed in Chapter 5.

Relations with the Navy Admiral Staff were excellent, since, from the very beginning, they were based on mutual recognition and respect. The problem of the maintenance of prestige, which so often influenced the actions of the Army General Staff, was completely unknown in the Navy. The Navy, like the Luftwaffe, was accustomed to viewing military affairs on a broad perspective, and the large number of Navy officers who went over to the Luftwaffe (both to the General Staff and to the troop units) was an expression of their awareness of a common outlook. The need to plan in terms of extensive geographic areas and the common closeness of the Luftwaffe and the Navy to the problems of modern technology helped to create a realistic relationship between their General Staffs, a relationship which survived both the early years of Luftwaffe development and the war itself without change.

Naturally, there was a great deal of lively discussion in the beginning concerning the advisability of a separate naval air force, and it goes without saying that the Navy's arguments were soundly conceived and objectively presented. When top-level command decided in favor of a single, unified Luftwaffe, the Navy High Command accepted the decision with good grace--although it never really renounced its claim to an air force of its own.

These differences of opinion, however, had no effect on the relationship of the two General Staffs. At all echelons, both Navy and Luftwaffe staffs did their utmost to make the best of a given situation and to cooperate fully in the accomplishment of their joint operations. There is no doubt that this was the case in all theaters of war--we need mention only two examples of exemplary coordination

here, the breakthrough of the German cruisers* in the Channel and the convoy duty in the Arctic.

As the area of the war extended and the demands made upon the Luftwaffe increased accordingly, it was no longer possible to grant the Navy all the air support it requested--especially in view of the fact that it had become standard procedure in the Navy to request greater support than was actually necessary in order to be sure of having enough after the inevitable cuts had been made! In many cases it was necessary for the Supreme Commander to make a final decision since the support requested by the Navy so far exceeded the resources which the Luftwaffe could spare from its other activities. This whole procedure, of course, was also intended to prove to top-level command that the temporary assignment of air forces to the Navy was not sufficient to assure the successful conduct of war at sea. It is not the province of this study to determine whether or not this view was justified; quite probably its justification varies in accordance with the nature of the over-all strategic plans and the presumable geographic scope of operations. During the last war, in any case, Navy requirements for air support were not adequately met. The lack of a four-engine aircraft made itself most unfavorably felt in this connection. Apart from this one grave error in judgment, it would seem that the policy of uniform air armament and concentration on a few basic aircraft types was quite right in view of Germany's situation and her actual capacity for armament production. Any other policy would have led to a dangerous dissipation of strength, which would neither have permitted the early successes of the Luftwaffe nor changed the final course of the war in any way. The Navy leaders had, however, a perfect right to disagree with this view.

I should like to emphasize once again that these differences of

* Editor's Note: On 11 and 12 February 1942 the Battle Cruisers Scharnhorst and Gneisenau and the Heavy Cruiser Prinz Eugen, escorted by seven destroyers and provided with air cover, successfully made their way through the English Channel from Brest to Wilhelmshaven and Kiel. For an interesting account of the role played by the GAF in this operation see Adolf Galland, The First and the Last, Henry Holt & Co., New York, 1954, pp. 123-38.

opinion among the High Commands were concerned with purely professional matters; they had nothing whatsoever to do with the personal relationships or the degree of cooperation between staffs, nor did they have any effect on the relations between the troops and their superior staffs.

Section IX: The Relationship of the Luftwaffe General Staff
to the National Socialist Party

The relationship of the Luftwaffe and its General Staff to the National Socialist Party was not essentially different from that of the other Armed Forces branches. There were one or two slight differences, however, and these led to the use (albeit jokingly) of the term "National Socialistic Luftwaffe" by the other two branches. These differences can be traced to the authority of Goering, who--as a powerful Party chief and as second in command--was able to nip in the bud any criticism directed at the Luftwaffe, his creation. Another factor was the State Secretary, who was also not without influence in the Party and who even employed a Party functionary in his personal staff to maintain his close relationship to that organization. Milch's attempt to influence the composition and the political tendency of the Luftwaffe officers corps through this man was a total failure, thanks to the vigilance of the first Chief of the Luftwaffe Personnel Office, Generaloberst Stumpff. Stumpff was able to guard the Luftwaffe corps against political influence and thus permit it to develop a purely military character like the officer corps of the other Armed Forces branches. His efforts were not in keeping with the desires of the Party, of course, but Goering was successful in diverting any adverse criticism.

The position of preference which the Luftwaffe enjoyed in the allocation of funds and armament production during the early years of its development--a preference which was certainly justified under the circumstances, but which nevertheless was somewhat painfully obvious--was also directly due to the power and influence of its Commander in Chief, although Army spokesmen erroneously attributed it exclusively to the close ties between the Luftwaffe and the ruling Party. To be sure, it was the Party which had made the establishment of this new Armed

Forces branch possible in the first place, and this fact may have made it unconsciously more benevolently inclined towards the Luftwaffe than towards the Army, which made no secret of its criticism of Party developments. After the initial successes of the Luftwaffe, this benevolence increased to exaggerated proportions, resulting in unrestrained propaganda which, combined with Goering's own public outbursts of enthusiasm, led to an extremely unrealistic picture of the capabilities of the Luftwaffe. After all, the new force had been established from scratch and sent off to war before its development had been fully completed.

The more apparent it became during the war that the Luftwaffe was unable to meet these unrealistically high expectations, the sharper became the criticism directed by the Party against Goering, the Luftwaffe leaders, and the Luftwaffe as a whole. The reaction of the general public was much more objective; despite the suffering brought upon the nation by the defeats sustained by the Luftwaffe, public opinion remained fair and realistic throughout the war. During the last war years, of course, there were isolated instances of bitter criticism, but this was directed almost exclusively at Goering himself and not at the Luftwaffe as an organization. The efforts of the Ministry of Propaganda, which was a past master in the art of reviving hope, and the sporadic successes which the Luftwaffe managed to attain--despite its hopeless inferiority to the enemy--combined to keep public opinion favorable even during the darkest hours.

The intensity of the Party's attacks on Goering, the Luftwaffe General Staff, and the Luftwaffe itself grew in proportion to the dawning realization that Germany was bound to lose the war. Those responsible for home air defense measures were subjected to particularly devastating criticism as large-scale, enemy bombardment of the Reich's cities increased. The Area Administrative Commanders (Gauleiters) were particularly careful to prepare detailed but inaccurate reports of Luftwaffe failures after every large attack and to direct them to Hitler personally; they were taking no chances on the public's failing to realize clearly just who the scapegoats were.³⁰

These reports invariably had repercussions, and in each case,

the Headquarters, Air Fleet Reich was called upon--either by the Luftwaffe General Staff or, on occasion, by Fuehrer Headquarters--to defend its position. Needless to say, this meant a great deal of additional work for a staff which was already seriously overburdened and hardly able to find the necessary time to carry out its immediate mission of operational command. Although Air Fleet Reich was accused of everything in the book, including treason, there is not a single instance in which it was possible to prove its staff guilty of negligence or wrong action. In every single case, the real reasons for the failure of the home air defense system lay at higher level, and in some cases even at the highest level, and this statement is subject to proof. The reports were unpleasant, however, in that they helped to increase the distrust which Hitler already felt towards Goering and the Luftwaffe General Staff; and Party Chief Martin Bormann took full advantage of them, as of every opportunity, to widen the gulf between the Fuehrer and the Luftwaffe.

The constantly changing attitude of the Party had no influence whatsoever on the development of the Luftwaffe. General Wever, its first Chief of the General Staff, had integrated it so firmly into the over-all Armed Forces organization that it was impossible to single it out for special treatment. There was no change in the situation under Jeschonnek; there is no doubt of his unwavering devotion to Hitler, but he was neither a friend nor a protege of the Party--first and foremost, he was a soldier. Under Jeschonnek's successors, the Party was no more successful in its attempts to gain a foothold within the Luftwaffe. On the contrary, it is common knowledge that it was precisely because of this that Himmler tried so hard to persuade Hitler to permit the formation of an air arm under the aegis of the SS, so that the Party might have some sort of air force under its control. In his personal war diary, General Kreipe comments as follows:

16 October 1944 Goering off deer-hunting at Rominten; I decide to visit him at his hunting lodge to get some urgently needed signatures. Reception very friendly, Goering sympathizes with my troubles, we go for a walk, during which he tells me he ought to stay at Rominten

permanently so that he can keep an eye on Himmler and Bormann--explains that Himmler has asked him to authorize the assignment of several Luftwaffe squadrons to the SS.

Himmler's efforts to gain approval for an SS air force were effectively countered by Goering and the Luftwaffe General Staff. In turn, the SS (i. e. Himmler) flatly refused to permit volunteers from its ranks to go over to the Luftwaffe as replacement pilots. This impasse assumed critical proportions in the spring of 1944, by which time the older, experienced, fighter crews had been so sadly reduced by personnel losses. At this point the Air Fleet Reich officially requested all Armed Forces branches and the SS (which had the best qualified personnel for the purpose) to release volunteers to the Luftwaffe for rush training and employment as replacement personnel in home air defense operations. All volunteers were frankly warned that the shortened training period would take its toll of some lives in training accidents and that the actual missions against the enemy might also involve deliberate self-sacrifice. The Headquarters, Air Fleet Reich was convinced that there were still enough young men who would be willing to volunteer despite the poor chances for survival. However, all the agencies contacted--Party and SS to the fore--refused to release personnel to the Luftwaffe. ³¹

After the conspiracy of 20 July 1944, so-called National Socialist Guidance Officers were assigned to all branches of the Armed Forces. They had little influence, however, on the activity of the Luftwaffe General Staff, its relationship to superior command, to the troop units, or to civilian agencies of the Party. Inasmuch as the individual commanders were given some voice in determining which men would fill these positions, it was possible to avoid wholesale infiltration of dyed-in-the-wool Party men.

Although the Guidance Officers were nominally subordinate to the commanders to whose units they were assigned, and not to the General Staff Chiefs, most of them went out of their way to cooperate in the staff activities determined by the Chiefs. Their own activity was usually limited to the evaluation and distribution of propaganda publications, to the delivery of politically-tinted lectures designed to

increase the troops' will to fight, and to reports on troop morale submitted through their own channels. In practice, these reports were usually discussed beforehand and approved by the chief of staff concerned.

It is probable that these men were expected to keep watch over the political attitudes of the officer corps and its leaders, and there may have been isolated cases in which they actually did so; in the vast majority of instances, however, no attempts were made in this direction. If this sort of activity was really expected of the Guidance Officers, then it was extremely foolish to select military men for the role, for most of them have extraordinarily little talent for deception.

In any case, this system was hardly calculated to improve the relationship between the command agencies and the troops on the one hand, or the relationship between the command agencies and the Party on the other. The troops were generally inclined to view this development as an attempt by the Party to interfere in matters of military command and to gain a position of influence in a field which most emphatically was none of its concern.

Chapter 8

CONCLUSIONS

Within the foregoing text we have already mentioned certain aspects of the body of experience gained; there is no need of our repeating them here. The problems of command and technological development have also been dealt with in separate studies,* and the experience gained by Germany in these fields thoroughly discussed. In the present study it is important that we examine the basic principles which may be deduced from the experience gained by the Luftwaffe General Staff within its own particular field of endeavor and within the framework of the over-all command function of the Armed Forces. In our evaluation of these principles, we must bear in mind that the world is becoming smaller day by day through the developments of modern technology, and that it is practically impossible, in this era of atomic and hydrogen bombs, to base the lessons for tomorrow on the experience of yesterday.

The history of the German Luftwaffe and its General Staff has proved once more that each period of history has its own aspects and goes its own way; and this is particularly true of the methods employed in waging war. An officer who refuses to accept this fact will never be a great officer. Anyone who is acquainted with the histories of great military leaders knows full well that almost every one of them has introduced new methods and ideas in some sector of military activity and has thus helped to form the military outlook of his time.

Quite apart from his political views and practices, the question arises as to whether or not Hitler should be considered one of the great military leaders of his day. To begin with, it is clear that his "right" to the last word in military command was based solely on his position as political dictator of the nation; it was certainly not documented by any real experience or ability in the military sector. His

* See list at the end of this study.

point of view was geographically limited to the Continent, which was quite natural when we take into account that he gained his military experience as an ordinary soldier during World War I. He was incapable of assessing an enemy until that enemy was physically present on the battlefields adjoining the borders of the Reich, and in his opinion it was the very climax of military strategy to defeat him then and there. In this respect, incidentally, his thinking was remarkably akin to that of many members of the Army General Staff, who also had difficulty in thinking in terms of more than Continental involvement. In Hitler's concept the traditional weapons of the Army and the traditional methods of operation were the primary instruments of warfare. Consequently, it was for these that he felt the deepest interest. The Luftwaffe and the Navy interested him only insofar as they could be employed within the framework of Continental warfare. In the last analysis, Hitler was one of those people who see no inconsistency in beginning a war at exactly the same point where the last one stopped.

On the other hand, we must concede that he was also receptive to the introduction of basic innovations in the field of military operations. He granted Goering full power to requisition the resources he needed in order to create a strong and independent Luftwaffe; he supported Guderian--contrary to the recommendations of his chief military advisors--in the creation of a tactical armored force and thus laid the cornerstone of another spectacular success. Going against every traditional principle of military common sense and against the advice of his closest military colleagues, he agreed to General von Manstein's plan to split the French front in the middle, although the terrain was wholly unsuited to tank operations, and thus made a decision which was to provide the key to the initial success of the Western campaign.

A certain touch of genius is unmistakably evident here, but so, on the other hand, are the bigoted conservatism and the overweening self-confidence of a man who thought he could unite all the qualities demanded of a great military leader within himself without ever having had any training for such a mission. In the end it was this presumptuous self-confidence which led to Hitler's downfall.

His biggest mistake--a typical one for his personality--was

his determination to conduct the war as he saw fit, rather than to permit this to remain the province of experienced military men. Goering made a similar mistake in the Luftwaffe when he refused to grant his General Staff Chief the necessary authority to carry out the missions required for the successful conduct of air operations. All of this only goes to prove that the machinery of modern warfare is so extensive and so complex that it is no longer possible for one person to control it effectively. The mighty military apparatus of the Third Reich needed an over-all Armed Forces General Staff whose chief was provided with full authority to supervise military preparations and to direct the conduct of military operations. Since this was not the case (thanks to Hitler's conviction that he himself and his comparatively small staff of military assistants were capable of handling everything), there was no central agency responsible for the over-all supervision of the many military and civilian agencies whose participation is required for the successful conduct of a modern war. In the absence of such centralized control, the General Staffs of the Luftwaffe and the other Armed Forces branches were forced to concern themselves with matters which ought not to have been their responsibility.

The concurrent operation of three separate General Staffs (this includes the Admiral Staff of the Navy) and the often conflicting activities of countless other military agencies, some of them provided with all-encompassing special powers, was bound to lead to complete chaos in the command organization; the present study has shown that this was the case, on a smaller scale of course, within the command organization of the Luftwaffe. Any war carried out under these circumstances against an enemy with almost unlimited resources and with the freedom to move about over a wide geographical area was doomed to ultimate defeat.

The lessons to be drawn from the above should be taken to heart not only by every responsible statesman, but especially by those who have the task of assuring the security of their nations within the framework of a collective security system. The problems involved in collective military preparations during peacetime and in the collective conduct of military operations in war can be effectively met only by a permanent centralized command organization. In such a

system, the difficulties experienced by the Third Reich, because of the lack of centralized control, would be multiplied by the number of partner nations participating in the system.

Even the problems of the Luftwaffe General Staff, as one of several service branch staffs, have shown us clearly that a military staff can no longer restrict itself to purely military questions. Under present conditions, all aspects of warfare have some influence on the private life of the population--on administration, economic activity, traffic and communications, finance, etc. The air offensive of the Allied powers against Germany, for example, provided ample proof of the fact that the civilian population of a warring nation is just as subject to the effects of enemy action as the soldier at the front. Effective disruption of the sources of military supply and transport facilities is quite capable of paralyzing a nation's armed forces, and may be a decisive factor in determining the outcome of the war. All of this means that a war under modern conditions requires the careful integration of a great many phases of the life of the nation, and that complete uniformity in the planning and conduct of operations is absolutely imperative. It would be unrealistic to maintain that the military is capable of handling all this without help. On the other hand, so long as wars are ultimately decided by weapons, it seems logical that the military should continue to occupy a position of priority in matters of operational command. The question which we must decide is how we should prepare for a future war and how that war should be conducted. The conditions which developed within the fairly small framework of the Axis coalition during World War II can give us certain clues to the proper answer.

Nearly all of Germany's difficulties during World War II can be directly or indirectly traced to the lack of a central command organization. Thus the first prerequisite must be the establishment of a central instrument of command, which I shall call an armed forces general staff. Within the framework of constitutional policy and procedures, this staff should have authority over all civilian and political agencies in all questions relating to the defense of the nation; it should have the status of a superior staff for the general staffs of the service branches making up the armed forces. In the event of international

alliances, an over-all planning agency should be set up during peacetime and entrusted with the authority and missions on a supranational basis which the armed forces general staff exercises on a national basis.

In keeping with the importance of its missions, the armed forces general staff should be made up of the best qualified General Staff officers from all branches of the service and of outstanding personalities from public life, and these two groups should then be given joint training for their roles in the accomplishment of a joint mission. This training should be carefully designed to orient the members of the armed forces general staff concerning the problems involved in the conduct of a global war and those aspects of global warfare which are bound to affect the life of the nation--or nations in case there is a coalition--in time of war. The nation's best-trained minds should be set to work to evaluate conditions in potentially hostile countries; the men selected for this task may be either active or reserve members of the armed forces general staff; rank or civilian profession should not be permitted to influence the choice. Outstanding representatives from the field of scientific research as well as from all other fields of public endeavor should also be given a seat and a voice on the staff.

The problem of the integration of all these various persons into the work of military preparations and the conduct of military operations is one which will require a great deal of study--a possible future war would be impossible to conduct without these persons. Any nation which buries its best minds in subordinate jobs during wartime merely because they happen to belong to people who have no military rank is guilty of wasting an important part of its best military potential on meaningless activity.

The points which we have discussed above in connection with the armed forces general staff are also applicable, on a smaller scale, to the general staffs of the individual service branches of each nation. The missions assigned to these staffs should be specifically limited in nature and should be determined by the over-all armed forces general staff. Within the restricted framework of these

missions, however, the subordinate general staffs will also require the help of prominent representatives of those fields of civilian endeavor which have some bearing on the mission of their particular branch. In this connection we need only recall the lack of contact between the Luftwaffe General Staff and the agencies responsible for armaments research and development and the unfortunate results it had on the course of the war. The only possible conclusion to be drawn from this is that the decentralization of the various aspects affecting the conduct of war, as it was practiced in the Third Reich--except by Hitler himself--and, strangely enough, earnestly furthered by Goering, must inevitably lead to a weakening of the over-all command apparatus. The establishment of a central command and planning agency is now more necessary than ever before. The military exclusiveness of the traditional General Staff, at any rate, can no longer be justified.

Those principles which are accepted as applicable to the conduct of war on its over-all scale should be equally applicable to the conduct of operations in each individual theater of operations. During the course of World War II, Germany often placed an Army or Luftwaffe commander in command of operations in a particular, remote theater of war (Africa, Norway, Finland, etc.). In most cases these commanders had only their own staffs to assist them, and no matter how well-versed they might be in the affairs of their own particular branch, they were bound to be limited in outlook. Occasionally, liaison officers from the other Armed Forces branches were also available, but these had no command authority over the troop units belonging to their service branches. Ordinarily, the commander had direct authority only over the units of his own service branch, while all other units received their orders from their own local command headquarters. So long as all the parties concerned were convinced of the need for close cooperation, this method was perfectly feasible; in practice, however, one cannot always rely on the good will of all the parties involved. As a matter of principle, remotely located theaters of war should always have a superior operations staff, detached from the armed forces general staff, in order to assure a certain degree of uniformity in the employment of the available forces.

The frequent changes in organizational structure with which

the Luftwaffe General Staff had to contend both before and during the war proved most unfortunate. The troop general staffs, however, were only slightly affected by them. There was never time for the responsibilities of the Staff to become as firmly established as the successful accomplishment of its mission required. We have already discussed some of the disadvantages arising from this situation. Nevertheless, there would seem to be no doubt but that general staffs ought to be retained in the individual service branches, provided that these staffs restrict themselves to their proper missions of operational command, organization, and training, and that they receive their instructions in this respect from a superior armed forces general staff. The fact that the individual Armed Forces branches were often able to develop their own plans and pursue their own goals during World War II must be attributed to the lack of an Armed Forces command agency capable of issuing competently prepared and unequivocal orders; this lack was bound to lead to a blurring of the lines of authority and responsibility and to a dissipation of forces.

The general staffs of the individual service branches, like the executive agencies of other public service institutions, should be nothing but executive instruments for the armed forces general staff. Their influence on the conduct of war should be limited to those specific operations for which they have been assigned responsibility, for too broad a delegation of command authority tends to weaken the over-all strength.

One very important responsibility of the individual service general staffs would be the selection of their representatives to the armed forces general staff, as well as the careful pre-training of younger candidates for these positions. The officers selected for service on the armed forces general staff should not be too young; they should very definitely have had some experience in the planning and command of operations within their own particular service branches. The experience of the Luftwaffe General Staff during World War II is indicative of the fact that extremely young and inexperienced officers on high-level staffs are capable of doing a great deal more damage than they can later rectify. On the other hand, of course, the officers selected for the armed forces general staff should not be so old that

they are no longer capable of thinking in terms of new and larger problems.

In order to be eligible for promotion to the rank of a general officer, a man should be required to have proved his fitness for service on the armed forces general staff, or, better still, have served successfully with that body. A general officer in any service branch cannot be considered capable of directing the operations of a large number of troops unless he is thoroughly familiar with the problems involved in the over-all conduct of operations and with the potentialities and requirements of the other service branches. The criticism levied at many an otherwise highly capable German general can certainly be attributed in part to his lack of experience outside his own service branch. It is equally certain that a great many of the German generals would not have gone along with Hitler if they had had access to full information and had thus been truly aware of the over-all situation.

An article appearing in Volume 8 of a publication on world politics of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Demokratischer Kreise* contains some interesting comments regarding the future relationship between statesman and military leader:

. . . In the future, too--in fact, in all probability particularly in the future--there will be general staff officers. These men will have to be familiar with all the many and varied ramifications of military affairs, and will also have to possess a certain degree of familiarity with the equally complex ramifications of developments in the political sphere. Their frame of reference must encompass the entire world; otherwise they will be incapable of filling their posts as competent advisors and aides. The organizational structure of the general staff of the future will be closely akin to that of the political organization of the larger defense areas. Narrow national barriers would only be a danger to the successful accomplishment of its

* (Study Group, Democratic Societies), author unknown.

mission. The traditional concept of military service as duty to the nation--or supranational unit--must remain.

The statesman, who quite correctly claims the right to establish goals for the strategic employment of the nation's armed forces and to place certain limitations on their activity, will have to give ground on one point; he should avail himself freely of the advice and recommendations of the military leader, but he must not, under any circumstances, interfere in matters of strategic or tactical command. These must remain the province of the military leader, who will employ them as he sees fit in order to achieve the strategic goals established by the statesman.

True cooperation between the statesman and the soldier--indispensable to the successful achievement of their common goal--is possible only if the statesman is capable of thinking constructively and realistically in regard to strategy, i. e. the over-all conduct of military operations. The statesman, too, should be at least somewhat familiar with the basic principles of military affairs. Above and beyond the demands of his own particular field, the military leader--particularly at higher level--must be sufficiently at home in the political sphere to comprehend the broad ramifications of developments in politics or diplomacy. He must, of course, be very careful to see that his personal ambition does not lead him into a position of non-critical acceptance of the political regime.

The same thing is true of the members of the general staff.

There are certain basic guidelines whose acceptance will be decisive for the future. We mention them in closing in the hope that they may become firmly entrenched in the thinking of both statesman and military leader.

The political leader, or statesman, bears the responsibility for the fate of his nation. This cannot be otherwise.

Thus, the political leader must be granted the right to make the final decision in matters of preparing the nation for defense or of waging war.

Once the decision has been taken, however, and the political leader has established the over-all objectives, the military leader must take over and must apply his knowledge and experience to the achievement of these objectives.

If the political leader is objective in his evaluation of the nation's position, and if he is confident of the wisdom of the course he is pursuing, then any attempt at war-mongering will be doomed to failure. The political leader will do well to remember that there is a healthy tendency towards pacifism in the make-up of every responsible military man. A soldier knows war and knows what suffering it means for the nation and the armed forces alike. For this reason, he will do his best to avoid war if at all possible. . . .

Precisely in connection with the above remarks it might be well to point out that Hitler's "Basic Directive No. 1," discussed in the introduction of this study, was catastrophic in its effects. Because of this directive, no one in a position of military responsibility was ever informed of the ultimate aims of the Fuehrer, and no one--not even the members of the Armed Forces High Command--was given access to sufficient information to construct an accurate picture of the over-all situation. And no military leader, whether he be a member of the general staff or in charge of some other important military function, can fulfill his mission effectively unless he is informed of the ultimate objectives of the political leader and is familiar with the over-all situation. Otherwise he is like a hen who pecks about in the dark and occasionally manages to find a grain of corn.

The selection of individuals to fill the top posts in the political and military life of the nation must be handled with great care so that there will be no risk of the abuse of military security regulations.

As regards the post of Chief of the General Staff, in the sense

which was usual within the German Armed Forces during World War II, one can only conclude that it was an unfortunate one for the Chief of the General Staff as well as for the chiefs of subordinate staffs within the troop organization. The post was adopted from the rich tradition of the past. No attempt, however, was made to give it the traditional authority which might have justified its existence.

If we concede the wisdom of giving the commander of a unit, or even of a fairly large segment within a service branch, full responsibility for directing the operations of the troops under his command, then there would seem to be no need for a Chief of the General Staff. It is difficult to justify the employment of such highly-qualified officers in a post which is practically devoid of responsibility. One remedy would be to consolidate the position of the Chief of the General Staff--of an armed forces branch, a troop general staff, etc.--with that of the deputy commander. In this way, the Chief of the General Staff, by serving at the same time as deputy commander, would have control over the entire element rather than only over portions of it. Administrative functions, as well as any other functions which are not directly concerned with operational command, could be made a specific responsibility of this position. The authority of the commander would thus be secure, even in the eyes of the troops, and the ambiguity of his authority over the staff would be once and for all dispelled. The deputy commander, of course, would have to be a general officer and his training and experience would have to be such as to qualify him for his position in the eyes of the armed forces general staff. All the other officers on the troop general staff could be members of the general staff corps of their particular service branch.

The officers selected for general staff training should be men who have proved their ability and their strength of character; they should not be chosen on the basis of their ability to march correctly, their talent for sports, their skill in aerial combat, or their social accomplishments. Stupidity and vain ambition in the command organization can do more damage than a defeat in battle, for they can undermine the confidence which the troops must feel in their leaders. Experience with the troops and proven ability in action should be made prerequisites for service on the general staff. Spotty or limited

training of the officers occupying high-level positions can also result in the loss of troop confidence. We have come to recognize the fallaciousness of the view that young, inexperienced, and untrained holders of war decorations are more suited for general staff service and operational command than the carefully selected and thoroughly trained general staff officer, unless, of course, these younger men possess the same qualifications as the latter. The experience accumulated by the Luftwaffe General Staff in this respect is as unequivocal as it was unfortunate.

The question of whether or not the general staff officer should wear a distinctive uniform is largely a matter of personal taste. In the case of the Luftwaffe General Staff, it cannot be established that the distinctive uniform had any appreciable influence on its relationship to the troops. On the other hand, the General Staff uniform always provided a certain extra motivation for the young officer to strive for eligibility for General Staff training. At the same time, it served as compensation for the fact that General Staff officers were rarely singled out for military decorations. This fact, deriving from Hitler's and Goering's attitude towards the General Staff, did little to increase the general desire to be associated with it, particularly since military decorations very often brought with them rapid promotions which had little or nothing to do with ability or knowledge. During World War I the situation was different; bravery was rewarded with the highest decorations, but military ability was very definitely a prerequisite for promotion, and the fantastically rapid promotion policy of World War II was unknown. The withholding of decorations from General Staff members on the basis that they were "nothing but aides" created widespread discontent in General Staff circles and did much to diminish the incentive and eagerness to do a good job for General Staff officers at all echelons. And, indeed, one could hardly expect that appointment to the General Staff would be considered a particularly desirable honor so long as General Staff service was evaluated as second-rate. This is an error in judgment which must be avoided in the future; indeed, the troops themselves have every reason to demand that it be avoided, for a second-rate command organization is of no good whatsoever to them.

In closing I should like to mention one other important lesson

taught by Germany's experience. Events have proved beyond any doubt that the rapid turn-over in General Staff chiefs was a catastrophe for the Luftwaffe General Staff. It is probable that the development and expansion of the Luftwaffe and its General Staff would have been far more satisfactory if the first General Staff Chief, General Wever, had been permitted to carry his mission to completion. It lies in the nature of the situation that any new general staff chief--provided that he is a man of character and personality--will try to impress his own personality on both command organization and troops. If he is then removed from his post before his ideas have had time to take effect, he leaves behind an indeterminate structure, and his successor has no alternative but to start experimenting from the beginning. When a general staff has too many chiefs within a relatively short period, as was the case with the Luftwaffe General Staff, the result is proverbial: "Too many cooks spoil the broth!"

FOOTNOTES

Chapter 1

1. Based on material pertaining to the History of the German General Staff, including a summary prepared by Branch 8 of the Luftwaffe General Staff, in A/IV, Karlsruhe Document Collection.
2. Carl von Clausewitz, Vom Kriege (On War), 16th Edition, Verlag Ferdinand Duemmler, Bonn (this is the same publishing house which brought out the original edition after von Clausewitz' death).

Chapter 2

1. Based on the author's personal experience.
2. Based on personal conversations between the author and General Wever during the author's incumbency as an advisory expert for General Staff officer administration.

Chapter 3

1. The original of this speech has been lost. A copy is contained in "Walther Wever - Zum Gedaechtnis (Sonderdruck)" (Walther Wever - In Memory) (reprint), appearing in the Nachrichtenblatt des Wever'schen Familienverbandes e. V (News Bulletin of the Wever Family Society), Number 12, 1936.
2. D/II/1, Karlsruhe Document Collection.
3. Kesselring, Soldat Bis zum letzten Tag, Athenaeum-Verlag, Bonn, 1943, p. 39. The American edition was published under the title: A Soldier's Record, Wm. Morrow & Co., New York, 1954.

4. Ibid., p. 4.
5. Kesselring, Der Generalstab des deutschen Heeres unter Zugrundelegung der Fragebogen der Historical Division mit einem kurzgehaltenen Anhang ueber den Luftwaffengeneralstab (The Army General Staff, based on the Historical Division Questionnaires; including a Brief Appendix on the Luftwaffe General Staff), Karlsruhe Document Collection.
6. Walter Goerlitz, Der zweite Weltkrieg 1939-1945, (The Second World War, 1939-1945), Stuttgart, 1951, p. 428.
7. Ibid., p. 429
8. G/VI/4d, Karlsruhe Document Collection.
9. Luftwaffen-Personalamt Nr. 10624/42, geh., 6. 3. 1942; Nachwuchs an Generalstabsoffizieren (Luftwaffe Personnel Office No. 10624/42, Secret, 6 March 1942; Recruiting of General Staff Officers), A/IV, Karlsruhe Document Collection.
10. Der Chef des Generalstabes Nr. 740/42, geh., 28 Okt. 1942 (Chief of the General Staff No. 740/42, Secret, 28 Oct. 1942); A/IV, Karlsruhe Document Collection.
11. Excerpt from a letter dated 11 May 1955 from Generaloberst Erhard Raus to Professor Richard Suchenwirth, B/II, Karlsruhe Document Collection.

Chapter 4

1. Personnel Office, No. 2654/44, 1/7/44, Karlsruhe Document Collection, A/IV.
2. Dienstanweisungen fuer das Mob. -Jahr 1938/1939, 1 Aug 1938, (Service Regulations for Mobilization 1938-1939, 1 Aug 1938) A/II/2, Karlsruhe Document Collection.

3. Nr. 401/33, geh. Kdos. In 1(L) V, 21. 3. 33 (File 140/33, Classified, In 1(L) V, dated 21 March 1933); quoted in Geschichte des deutschen Generalstabs, (Arbeitsmaterial), (M/4), (History of the German General Staff, (working material)) A/IV, Karlsruhe Document Collection.
4. Nr. 1786/32, geh. Kdos., 10. 8. 32 (File 1786/32, Classified, dated 10 August 1932), Geschichte des deutschen Generalstabs, (History of the German General Staff) (M/4), A/IV, Karlsruhe Document Collection.
5. Der Reichswehrminister Nr. 150/33, geh. Kdos., T2 III B In 1(L), vom 21. 3. 33 (Office of the Reichs Minister of Defense, File 150/33, Classified, T2 III B In 1(L), dated 21 March 1933); quoted in Geschichte des deutschen Generalstabs (Arbeitsmaterial) (M/4), A/IV, Karlsruhe Document Collection.
6. Kesselring, Der deutsche Generalstab - Beruehrungspunkte des Heeres-Generalstabs mit dem Luftwaffengeneralstab (The German General Staff - A Comparison of the Army and Luftwaffe General Staffs); A/III/4, Karlsruhe Document Collection.
7. Generalleutnant Hermann Plocher, A/IV, Karlsruhe Document Collection.
8. See Figure 2.
9. Gem. R. d. L. u. Ob. d. L., Chef Genst. II, 1 Nr. 1800/37 geh. Kdos. vom 2. 6. 37 (To: Reichs Minister of Aviation and Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, and Chief, General Staff II, 1 File 1800/37, Classified, dated 2 June 1937).
10. Gedanken zum Problem Die Fuehrung in der deutschen Luftwaffe (Thoughts on the Problem: Command within the German Luftwaffe); A/I/1a, Karlsruhe Document Collection.

11. R. d. L. u. Ob. d. L., Chef Genst. II, 1 Nr. 1800/37 geh. Kdos. vom 2. 6. 37 (Reichs Minister of Aviation and Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, to Chief, General Staff, II, 1 File 1800/37, Classified, dated 2 June 1937).
12. D/II, Karlsruhe Document Collection.

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Chapter 7

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8. Karl Koller, Der letzte Monat (The Last Month), Mannheim, 1949, p. 105.
9. Kesselring, Soldat bis zum letzten Tag, p. 26.
10. As the author himself once heard Goering explain.
11. Koller, Der letzte Monat.
12. General Kreipe's Diary, p. 29 (H/I/3, Karlsruhe Document Collection).
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14. General von Waldau was Chief of the Luftwaffe Operations Staff.
15. H/I/1, Karlsruhe Document Collection.
16. Ernst Heinkel, Stuermisches Leben (A Stormy Life), Stuttgart, 1953.

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26. Ibid.
27. Generalleutnant a. D. J. Schmid, Die 5. Abteilung des Generalstabes der Luftwaffe (Ic) vom 1. 1. 38 bis 1. 10. 42 (Branch V (Intelligence) of the Luftwaffe General Staff from 1 January 1938 to 1 October 1942); A/IV, Karlsruhe Document Collection.
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Appendix 1

THE ORGANIZATION, CHAIN OF COMMAND, AND FUNCTIONS
OF THE LUFTWAFFE GENERAL STAFF AS OF WAR'S END*

The final organizational structure of the Luftwaffe High Command and the Reichs Ministry of Aviation represented the sum total of past experience, past error, and the events of the war in respect to the influence they exerted on the function of military command. We must distinguish carefully between the final reorganization, completed in the spring of 1945, and the many provisional modifications, dictated by the exigencies of the immediate situation, which preceded it and which, in many cases, were obvious deviations from the recognized organizational ideal. A great many of the agencies appearing in the wartime top-level organizational structure were retained in the final reorganization of 26 March 1945; organizationally, however, they were no longer a part of the General Staff, but were directly subordinate to the Reichs Marshal.

As we have seen, responsibility for the conduct of military operations had been concentrating itself more and more in the person of the Chief of the General Staff until, after the reorganization of 26 March 1945, this responsibility was his alone. By war's end the office of the State Secretary was restricted to certain purely administrative functions of the Reichs Ministry of Aviation. Inasmuch as the organizational structure and missions assigned to the General Staff by the reorganization of 26 March 1945 were the fruit of the bitter experience of war, it has seemed expedient to devote the following section to a comprehensive summary of them.

Section I: The Reichs Minister of Aviation and Commander in
Chief, Luftwaffe

* Based on material contained in A/II/2, Karlsruhe Document Collection.

Responsibilities and Delegation of Authority

The responsibilities of the Reichs Minister of Aviation and Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe were clearly defined in the Luftwaffe Mobilization Plan of 1 August 1938, and in principle they remained the same, viz. :*

The Reichs Minister of Aviation and Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe is a single individual. He is the supreme military commander of the Luftwaffe and, at the same time, its highest administrative officer, charged with directing the operations of the Luftwaffe and with issuing the necessary orders for its expansion and equipment in respect to personnel, materiel, and the establishment of industrial requirements. Further, he is charged with responsibility for air defense operations within the German Reich. He is also responsible for enforcing the provisions of German air sovereignty. The National Weather Service is under his supervision.

In order to aid him in the accomplishment of these missions, in 1945 he was assigned two deputies:

1. Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff, with the Luftwaffe High Command.
2. State Secretary of Aviation as Chief of Aviation.

Moreover, the following agencies were directly subordinate to him:

1. Chief of the Luftwaffe Personnel Office.
2. Commander of the Replacement Luftwaffe.

* Dienstanweisung fuer das Mob. -Jahr 1938/1939, (Aus Besondere Anlage 1 zum Mob. Plan, Luftwaffe), Ausgabe vom 1.8.1939 (Service Regulations for Mobilization, 1938-1939 (from Special Appendix 1 of Mob. Plan, Luftwaffe) 1 August 1938), in A/II/2, Karlsruhe Document Collection.

3. General of the Antiaircraft Artillery Forces, Office of the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe.
4. Supply Operations Staff
5. Chief Judge Advocate, Luftwaffe.
6. Special Missions and Troop Recommendations Staff.
7. Special Commissioner in Charge of Defense against Four-Engine Bomber Units.
8. Special Commissioner in Charge of Defense against Enemy Long-Range Weapons.
9. General Commissioner in Charge of Jet Aircraft.
10. Inspector for Training of Luftwaffe Rocket Equipped Units.

Section II: The Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff

The appropriate service regulations define his responsibilities as follows:*

1. The Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff is the first assistant and advisor to the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, in all matters pertaining to the conduct of air warfare. He is responsible for operational planning and for issuing the necessary orders to subordinate troop elements. It is his duty to keep the Commander in Chief currently informed in regard to these matters.

2. The Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff is directly responsible to the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe. He has the

* Ibid.

status of a commander in chief of an air fleet and the disciplinary authority of a Senior Commander, Luftwaffe in accordance with the provisions of Luftwaffe Service Regulation No. 3/9. His deputy is the Chief of the Luftwaffe Operations Staff.

3. In accordance with instructions issued by the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, the Chief of the General Staff is responsible for establishing the principles to be followed in the preparation of operational orders and in the setting up of armament requirements. He is responsible for authorizing the detachment of Luftwaffe units to other branches of the Armed Forces, as well as for personnel utilization and supply operations within the Luftwaffe. He issues instructions pertaining to the organization, training, equipping, and supply of Luftwaffe and air defense elements.

4. The Chief of the General Staff is responsible for issuing orders pertaining to operational matters directly to the technical services generals and to the Chief Administrative Officer, and--in questions of technical air armament--to the Chief of Technical Air Armament.

5. Insofar as possible the Chief of the General Staff will participate in all conferences held by the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, on matters having to do with his area of responsibility. He is to be informed of the results of all military conferences held by the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe. The Commander of the Replacement Luftwaffe, the Chief of Aviation, and the chiefs of all other offices directly responsible to the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, are required to keep the Chief of the General Staff fully informed of policy decisions within their own offices. The General Staff Chief is authorized to request any documents he may need for his work from any and all Luftwaffe sections.*

* Underlined by the author. This passage offers incontrovertible evidence of the status of the Chief of the General Staff as primary military commander.

6. The Chief of the General Staff is to be consulted in the appointment of General Staff officers and in the filling of General Staff and attache posts, and has the right to voice any objections he may have. In such case, the Chief of the Luftwaffe Personnel Office is required to present these objections to the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, for decision.

7. The Air War Academy and Branch VIII, General Staff are under the direct supervision of the Chief of the General Staff.

The following elements are directly responsible to the Chief of the General Staff:

A. The Chief of the Luftwaffe Operations Staff, whose responsibilities are as follows:

a. The Chief of the Luftwaffe Operations Staff is directly subordinate to the Chief of the General Staff, and is the latter's permanent deputy. He has the status of a commanding general and the disciplinary authority of a Senior Commander in accordance with the provisions of Luftwaffe Service Regulation No. 3/9.

b. He submits recommendations for the conduct of air warfare and for the planning of Luftwaffe and air defense operations. At the behest of the Chief of the General Staff, he prepares operational orders for the troops under the command of the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, (including the troops of allied nations) and issues instructions for coordinated operations with other Armed Forces branches.

c. He supervises the evaluation of combat experience for use by combat and training units.

d. After obtaining the concurrence of the Chief of the General Staff, he establishes technological requirements and tactical requirements pertaining to organization, supply, and

training (including the training of Luftwaffe signal communications personnel), and issues such requirements to the other sections of the General Staff, to the technical services generals, and to the Luftwaffe Inspectorates.

e. The following agencies are directly responsible in every respect to the Chief of the Operations Staff:

- 1) Branch I, Operations, of the Luftwaffe Operations Staff
- 2) Branch V, Intelligence, of the Luftwaffe Operations Staff
- 3) Branch VII of the General Staff
- 4) Chief, Air Weather Service
- 5) Senior Commander, Troop Gas Defense
- 6) Chief of Air Defense - (operational subordination only)

B. The Quartermaster General, whose responsibilities are as follows:

The Quartermaster General is responsible to the Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff. However, he possesses the right to direct access to the Reichs Minister of Aviation and Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe. He is responsible for keeping the Chief of the General Staff informed at all times in regard to the general status of the supply situation. He has the status of a commanding general, Luftwaffe and the disciplinary authority of a Senior Commander in accordance with the provisions of Luftwaffe Service Regulation No. 3/9.

a. In compliance with instructions issued by the Chief of the General Staff, he directs and supervises supply

operations (personnel and materiel) within the Luftwaffe. He is responsible for the devising of long-range measures to assure that the striking power of the Luftwaffe--including those elements detached to the Army and Navy--is kept intact by adequate and timely supply action. He is charged with responsibility for all matters pertaining to transport within the Luftwaffe.

Further, in accordance with instructions from the Chief of the General Staff, he is responsible for maintaining supply levels adequate to meet the requirements of units at the front, of schools, replacement units, and of newly activated units. He is responsible for the mobilization of personnel and for the handling of all matters connected with the organization of the Luftwaffe during wartime.

The Quartermaster General is responsible for the maintenance of the ground organization and for its expansion, if warranted.

b. At the behest of the Chief of the General Staff, he issues appropriate orders and instructions to subordinate headquarters, to the Commander of the Replacement Luftwaffe, and to the Chief of Technical Air Armament. He issues these instructions by order of the Luftwaffe High Command.

c. The Quartermaster General is responsible for establishing and maintaining rear area services in behalf of the Reichs Minister of Aviation and Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe.

He maintains liaison with the Quartermaster General, Army in connection with the joint use of Army rear area services and, if applicable, with the Chief of Staff, Naval Warfare.

After the reorganization of 1945, the following elements were made directly responsible to the Quartermaster General:

Organization Staff, consisting of: Branches II and IX and Strength and Equipment Authorization Branch; Branch IV; Branch VI; Chief of Supply; Chief of Motor Vehicle Transport; Chief, Medical Service; Chief Engineer, Luftwaffe; Luftwaffe Ground Organization Branch; Chief, Air Liaison Service; Chief of Air Transport for the Armed Forces.

C. General of the Signal Forces, whose responsibilities were as follows:

a. The General of the Signal Forces, Luftwaffe is personally* subordinate to the Reichs Minister of Aviation and Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe; technically and operationally, however, he is subordinate to the Chief of the General Staff. He has the status of a Commanding General, and the disciplinary authority of a Senior Commander in accordance with the provisions of Luftwaffe Service Regulation No. 3/9.

b. His responsibilities are as follows:

1) He directs the operations of the Luftwaffe signal forces, supervises the utilization and maintenance of the entire signal communications network of the Luftwaffe, and supervises the installation and operation of the ground equipment needed to carry out air traffic control, radio navigation, aircraft observation and reporting (including radar-controlled fighter aircraft operations), radio reconnaissance, radar observation, and radio jamming activity. He is responsible for establishing and presenting, to other Armed Forces branches and to civilian authorities, tactical and operational requirements in terms of technological equipment, and for supervising the distribution of such equipment. Further, he is responsible for preparing and revising operational instructions in his field.

2) He directs the training of Luftwaffe signal

* Author's Note: This was a special arrangement, based on considerations of time in rank.

communications personnel, supervising the work of troop unit instructors in this field. He is responsible for both the military and technical aspects of the training of Luftwaffe telecommunications engineers--members of the Engineer Corps or of the Prinz-Eugen Replacement Group--, and directs the advanced training of personnel in the telecommunications field.

3) At the behest of the Chief of the General Staff, he is responsible for the establishment and formulation of tactical technological requirements to be transmitted to the Chief of Technical Air Armament, viz:

aa) for ground communications equipment and other high frequency communications equipment (radar, radio navigation, etc., related fields), in concurrence with the appropriate technical services generals and with notification of Branch VI, Quartermaster General.

bb) for ground communications equipment and airborne radar equipment, at the request of the technical services generals concerned, and with notification of Branch VI, Quartermaster General.

He directs the testing of equipment at troop level and introduces new equipment. He is responsible for establishing procurement requirements for ground communications equipment for transmittal to the Chief of Technical Air Armament and, in conjunction with the Quartermaster General, for the distribution of such equipment.

c. He exercises an advisory function in the following:

1) the organization and equipment of the Luftwaffe communications forces and aircraft--in close cooperation with the Quartermaster General and the Chief of Technical Air Armament.

2) the utilization of personnel within the Luftwaffe communications forces--in close cooperation with the Quartermaster General and the Luftwaffe Personnel Office.

d. The General of the Signal Forces, Luftwaffe assumes the functions of a Luftwaffe Inspector in the following fields in case of war:

1) all units of the Luftwaffe communications forces.

2) all Luftwaffe signal communications personnel.

3) Luftwaffe supply units in respect to their handling of signal communications equipment.

e. The following agencies are subordinate to the General of the Signal Forces, Luftwaffe:

1) in every respect: Chief of Staff with Branches I through III; Chief, Inspectorate for Signal Communications with Branches IV through VI; Adjutant's Group; Inspector for Air Safety Control; Inspector for the Aircraft Reporting Service; Inspector for Radio Reconnaissance; Inspector for Radio Communications.

2) operationally subordinate: Senior Signal Officer, office of the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe.

3) subordinate in respect to training: Commanding General, Luftwaffe Signal Communications Training with the Luftwaffe Signal Communications Training Division and the Luftwaffe Signal Communications Replacement Division under his command; (requests relating to the training of airborne radio operators will be originated by the Commanding General, Pilot Training and transmitted to the General of the Signal Forces, Luftwaffe).

It is clear from the responsibilities assigned to the General

of the Signal Forces that the Luftwaffe communications organization enjoyed a very special status. Purely from the standpoint of organizational effectiveness, the special status of the General of the Signal Forces--which, after all, gave him direct influence over operations, organization, training, personnel utilization, development of equipment, and procurement--may not seem particularly desirable. In actuality--chiefly because of the personality involved--this highly unusual organizational set-up proved fully satisfactory, both during the peacetime period of the rapid expansion of the Luftwaffe communications force and during the extremely difficult war years. The service regulation which assigned these responsibilities to the General of the Signal Forces is a perfect example of the reciprocity of personality and organizational form--tailored to fit General Martini. This is, however, a special case and cannot be evaluated without reference to special circumstances.

D. The Chief Administrative Officer, Luftwaffe, whose responsibilities were as follows:

a. The Chief Administrative Officer, Luftwaffe, is the advisor of the Reichs Minister of Aviation and Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe in all matters pertaining to administration. Personally, he is directly responsible to the latter; technically and operationally he is responsible to the Chief of the General Staff.

b. The Chief Administrative Officer, Luftwaffe has the status of a Commanding General and the disciplinary authority of a Senior Commander, in accordance with the provisions of Luftwaffe Service Regulation No. 3/9, over officers of the Specialist Service and the officials of his own agency.

c. The following activities fall within the purview of the Chief Administrative Officer:

1) direction and supervision of all administrative duties, as prescribed by law, regulation, and special instruction, at all command and troop levels (Air Fleet and Air

Administrative Command Headquarters and all subordinate agencies);

2) supervision of all supply distribution normally falling within the purview of the administrative sections;

3) the establishment of troop requirements in the field of administrative services, and the evaluation of the experience gathered in all aspects of the administrative function, as well as the formulation of recommendations to be used by the Chief of Aviation in determining administrative requirements at Ministry level;

4) supervision of the procurement of supplies required for carrying out administrative duties and normally procured by unit administrative sections directly rather than through the Reichs Air Ministry;

5) execution of the administrative function within the Luftwaffe High Command.

d. The Chief Administrative Officer has the authority to issue orders and instructions pertaining to administrative matters to all headquarters and agencies under the command of the Reichs Minister of Aviation and Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe.

e. The Chief Administrative Officer, Luftwaffe has the status of a Luftwaffe Inspector over Luftwaffe administrative officers at all echelons (air fleet, army, air administrative area commands, corps, and division), including all subordinate administrative staff sections, and over the food service units (canteens and mess-halls - operational supervision; baker and butcher companies - administrative supervision) and coal storage depots in the occupied areas of the east.

He is the superior commander of all officers in the Specialist Service--the career field for all administrative

personnel--and of all the civilian officials employed in troop administration activity within the Luftwaffe.

The responsibilities assigned to the new post of Chief Administrative Officer, Luftwaffe are most noteworthy in that they established--for the first time--a channel through which the Chief of the General Staff could exert his influence over administrative matters.

E. The Chief of Technical Air Armament

The post of Chief of Technical Air Armament developed from the former Technical Office of the Reichs Air Ministry, via the Office of the Chief of Procurement and Supply, after administration of the air armament program had been turned over to the Minister of Armament. The creation of the office of the Chief of Technical Air Armament gave the Chief of the General Staff decisive influence over the entire field of technical air armament, a field which, in any case, is closely allied with operational command and should not be separated from it. This promising development suffered a setback, however, because of the tendency towards self-glorification of the Minister of Armament, Speer, who considered himself responsible solely to the Fuehrer, and not to the various Armed Forces branches.

The responsibilities of the Chief of Technical Air Armament were as follows:

a. The Chief of Technical Air Armament is directly responsible to the Chief of the General Staff. He has the status of a Commanding General, and the disciplinary authority of a Senior Commander in accordance with the provisions of Luftwaffe Service Regulation No. 3/9.

b. The Chief of Technical Air Armament is responsible for the following:

1) research, development, testing, and approval of all Luftwaffe equipment, including aviation fuels (the function of approval may also be exercised by the Army or Navy, if

applicable);

2) evaluation and processing of armament development requests originated by the Operations Staff, the technical services generals, etc. and submitted through Branch VI, Quartermaster General;

3) processing of armament requests (quantity, type, and quality of equipment) received through Branch VI, Quartermaster General and the Chief of Supply, and presentation of these requests to the Reichs Minister of Armament and War Production;

4) approval of new equipment for procurement and introduction in the field;

5) devising of long-range measures for the development of new equipment--in cooperation with the Operations Staff, the General, Pilot Training, and the technical services generals;

6) issuance of technical data, operational directions, spare part catalogues, and instructional material for new equipment;

7) compilation and evaluation of complaints regarding technical instruction at troop level, and the instruction of line units on technical matters;

8) issuance to the troops of orders and instructions pertaining to technological matters.

c. The Chief of Technical Air Armament supervises all research and developmental activity on technological equipment being done for the Luftwaffe within the areas of responsibility of the Army and Navy.

d. The Chief of Technical Air Armament is responsible

for representing the Luftwaffe High Command to the Reichs Minister of Armament and War Production in all matters pertaining to air armament.

e. The Chief of Technical Air Armament is to be consulted regarding the introduction of new equipment in the preparation of strength and equipment authorizations.

f. The Chief of Technical Air Armament will serve as technical advisor in the production of Luftwaffe equipment.

g. In all of his duties, the Chief of Technical Air Armament will maintain close liaison with the appropriate agencies of the Luftwaffe High Command and the Reichs Air Ministry, particularly with the technical services generals.

h. The following agencies are responsible to the Chief of Technical Air Armament: Headquarters, Testing Service and all Luftwaffe testing stations (operationally subordinate); Luftwaffe Air Technical Academy (in respect to the carrying out of experimental work).

F. Branch VIII of the General Staff, the responsibilities of which were as follows:

a. The Chief of Branch VIII, Luftwaffe General Staff is directly responsible to the Chief of the General Staff. He has the status and disciplinary authority of a brigade commander in accordance with the provisions of Luftwaffe Service Regulation No. 3/9.

b. In accordance with instructions issued by the Chief of the General Staff, he is responsible for the preparation of documentary material for the use of the officer corps and for use at Luftwaffe training centers for the intellectual education of the coming generations of officers.

c. He is responsible for keeping an exact historical record of air war events beginning with the year 1933 and

utilizing all available source materials.

d. This record will be compiled in the following publications:

- 1) Studies on Air War
- 2) Military Historical Documents of the Luftwaffe General Staff
- 3) How We Fight - Luftwaffe Field Regulations
- 4) A Survey of the Events of Air Warfare since 1933

The Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff will determine the advisability of publication of the above documents.

e. In addition to the responsibilities listed above, the Chief of the General Staff may assign special duties to the Chief of Branch VIII, as follows:

- 1) preparation of staff studies relating to specific problems of air warfare;
- 2) review of all material considered for publication on air warfare;
- 3) representation of the interests of the Luftwaffe in the press, at home and abroad.

f. The Chief of Branch VIII is responsible for maintaining close contact with the Luftwaffe Operations Staff, Luftwaffe headquarters, and all agencies concerned with Luftwaffe armament or questions of Luftwaffe technology.

He is expected to maintain liaison with the Armed Forces press division, with the military history branches of the Army and Navy, and with the special military history officials

appointed by the Fuehrer.

G. The Air War Academy

The Air War Academy was directly subordinate to the Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff. In this way, the latter was able to exert considerable direct influence on the training of the coming generations of General Staff officers.

Section III: The Technical Services Generals and Luftwaffe Inspectorates

The Luftwaffe Inspectorates, from which most of the offices of the technical services generals developed during the war, were an important instrument in the exercise of the over-all command function within the Luftwaffe and, thus, an important aid to the Chief of the General Staff.

The missions of an inspectorate are pretty much the same in the armed forces organization of every nation. The Luftwaffe inspectorates, however, were somewhat unusual in that they not only carried out the normal functions of an inspectorate, but also frequently acted as an executive instrument of command. Thus, their influence on the growth and development of the particular service branches they represented was often decisive. Both before and during the war it frequently happened that the basic principles of commitment, organization, and training were far more the intellectual product of the inspectorates and the technical services generals than of the appropriate sections of the General Staff. This is not particularly surprising in view of the fact that the inspectorates were usually staffed with men who were acknowledged specialists in their fields, whereas the majority of the members of the General Staff were embarking on fields of endeavor which were completely new to them--as we have seen in the preceding sections dealing with the development of the General Staff and the many difficulties which it faced.

Under these circumstances, it was only sensible to assign the

inspectorates to the Chief of the General Staff--rather, at that time, to the Chief of the Air Command Office--during the early period of Luftwaffe development, inasmuch as he was primarily responsible for guiding such development. On the other hand, it was a grave violation of military common sense that the inspectorates were later permitted to become pawns in the game of power played by the State Secretary and the Chief of the General Staff and to be assigned first to one and then to the other.

The most important technical inspectorates (i. e. offices of the technical services generals) were maintained until the end of the war. Others, established as a last resort to meet a momentary need, were disbanded or absorbed into other agencies as soon as their mission was accomplished.

The inspectorates provided a valuable channel for bringing important material to the attention of command. In many cases, the General Staff simply could not have fulfilled its mission had not the inspectorates--which had direct contact with the field units--been on hand with helpful recommendations and to clarify the objectives of the General Staff Chief to the troops. So that the reader may have a clearer concept of the interrelationship between these two instruments of command, I have presented the missions and chain of command of all the inspectorates and offices of the technical services generals in existence at that time. For those agencies still in operation and under the command of the Chief of the General Staff at the end of the war, the responsibilities have been quoted verbatim from applicable service regulations.

A. The General of the Reconnaissance Forces--formerly Luftwaffe Inspectorate 1

The office of the General of the Reconnaissance Forces became subordinate to the Chief of the General Staff again in 1941. The general himself was responsible to the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe. His responsibilities were as follows:

a. The General of the Reconnaissance Forces is

personally subordinate to the Reichs Minister of Aviation and Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe. For technical and operational supervision, he is under the command of the Chief of the General Staff. He has the status and disciplinary authority of a division commander in accordance with the provisions of Luftwaffe Service Regulation No. 3/9.

b. The General of the Reconnaissance Forces is responsible for assuming the functions of a Luftwaffe inspector over all air reconnaissance units (land-based), weather reconnaissance squadrons, reconnaissance schools, reconnaissance personnel replacement units, and over the Aerial Photography School. Moreover, he is in charge of all aerial photography sections at all Luftwaffe headquarters, higher-level command staffs, and units.

c. 1) In connection with military operations planned by the Luftwaffe Operations Staff, the General of the Reconnaissance Forces makes recommendations for the commitment and organization of the available reconnaissance units, taking into consideration their training, combat experience, personnel strength, and technological equipment.

2) The General of the Reconnaissance Forces is responsible for making periodic inspections of the reconnaissance units and weather reconnaissance squadrons in order to satisfy himself as to their standard of training, combat preparedness, and utilization of weapons and equipment. He makes reports of his findings to the Chief of the General Staff, the Luftwaffe Operations Staff, the commanders in chief of the air fleets, the commanding generals of the air corps, and the appropriate agencies of the office of the Reichs Minister of Aviation and Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe. In conjunction with the above agencies, he is responsible for devising means to correct any defects he may have noted.

d. The General of the Reconnaissance Forces is to be consulted in all matters pertaining to the activation, organization, conversion, equipment, and supply of air reconnaissance

units, weather reconnaissance squadrons, and aerial photography sections. He is expected to cooperate closely with the Quartermaster General, the Chief of Technical Air Armament, the General of the Signal Forces, the Chief Engineer, the Commander, Testing Stations, and the Commanding General, Pilot Training. He will also act as advisor to the above agencies in all questions concerning his field of endeavor. He will also be consulted in the planning of new activations within the aerial photography service.

e. In conjunction with the Luftwaffe Operations Staff, the General of the Reconnaissance Forces is responsible for the establishment of technological requirements for the development of both long-range and close-range reconnaissance aircraft, including airborne equipment, weapons, and ammunition.

f. The General of the Reconnaissance Forces is responsible for establishing technological requirements for the development of the equipment needed for aerial photography and for the evaluation of aerial photographs.

g. In accordance with instructions issued by the Luftwaffe Operations Staff, the General of the Reconnaissance Forces establishes training requirements for the Commanding General, Pilot Training and makes periodic inspections to make certain that uniformity is maintained in the training of air reconnaissance units and weather reconnaissance squadrons committed at the front, the reconnaissance personnel replacement groups, and the units temporarily assigned to him for refresher training.

h. In accordance with instructions issued by the Luftwaffe Operations Staff, Operations Branch and Branch VI or Branch IV, Quartermaster General, the General of the Reconnaissance Forces directs the distribution of aircraft equipment and aviation fuels, as well as the assignment of personnel, to the reconnaissance personnel replacement

groups and to the units temporarily assigned to him for refresher training.

i. The General of the Reconnaissance Forces is responsible for the compilation, evaluation, and application of military experience within his field of endeavor. Material pertaining to tactics will be routed to the Luftwaffe Operations Staff. In conjunction with the Luftwaffe Operations Staff, Operations Branch, he is responsible for the preparation of instructions, memoranda, operational and training directives for the air reconnaissance forces and the aerial photography service.

j. At the direction of the Luftwaffe Operations Staff, the General of the Reconnaissance Forces maintains close liaison with the Operations Branch, Army, in connection with air reconnaissance and aerial photography service for the Army. He acts as advisor to the Training and Organization Branches of the Army in the preparation of training directives pertaining to air reconnaissance and aerial photography.

k. The General of the Reconnaissance Forces is to be consulted in connection with the testing of new aircraft models, weapons, and equipment whenever these items concern his own field of endeavor.

l. The General of the Reconnaissance Forces is to be consulted in the determination of the airfields to be used by the training and replacement units under his command and by reconnaissance units temporarily relieved of duty at the front to undergo refresher training.

m. The following agencies are subordinate to the General of the Reconnaissance Forces in respect to technical supervision and training: Commanders of the Reconnaissance Personnel Replacement Groups, with subordinate units; 24th Training and Testing Headquarters; Luftwaffe Aerial Photography Section.

n. The General of the Reconnaissance Forces is not

authorized to issue independently operational orders to troop or staff sections, with the exception of those sections which are specifically operationally subordinate to him.

B. General of the Bomber Forces--formerly Luftwaffe Inspectorate 2.

The General was made subordinate to the Chief of the General Staff once more in 1941. His responsibilities were as follows:

a. The General of the Bomber Forces is personally subordinate to the Reichs Minister of Aviation and Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe. For technical and operational supervision, he is under the command of the Chief of the General Staff. He has the status and disciplinary authority of a division commander in accordance with the provisions of Luftwaffe Service Regulation No. 3/9.

b. In time of war the General of the Bomber Forces is responsible for assuming the functions of a Luftwaffe inspector over all long and close-range bomber units, all special duty bomber wings (Air Torpedo and Long-range Bomber Wings), and other units assigned to his command.

c. 1) In connection with military operations planned by the Luftwaffe Operations Staff, the General of the Bomber Forces makes recommendations for the commitment of the available close and long-range bomber units, taking into consideration their combat experience, training, personnel strength, and technological equipment.

2) The General of the Bomber Forces is responsible for making periodic inspections of assigned units in order to satisfy himself of their standard of training and utilization of weapons and equipment. He reports his findings to the appropriate agencies and sees that necessary action is taken to correct any faults he may have noted.

d. The General of the Bomber Forces is to be consulted in all matters pertaining to the activation, organization, equipment, and conversion of the close and long-range bomber units. He is expected to cooperate closely with the Quartermaster General, the Chief of Technical Air Armament, the General of the Signal Forces, the Chief Engineer, the Commanding General, Pilot Training, and the Commander, Testing Stations. He will also act as advisor to the above agencies in all questions concerning his field of endeavor. He is responsible for making periodic inspections of the close and long-range bomber units in order to assure himself of their combat preparedness. He will report his findings to the appropriate agencies and, in conjunction with these agencies, take the necessary action to secure immediate amelioration of any defects he may have noted.

e. In conjunction with the Luftwaffe Operations Staff, the General of the Bomber Forces is responsible for the establishment of technological requirements for the development of medium and long-range bomber aircraft, including airborne equipment, weapons, and ammunition. Moreover, he is responsible for guiding the development of bombardment techniques and navigation systems (coordinating with the General of the Signal Forces in questions concerning radio navigation).

f. The General of the Bomber Forces is responsible for assuring that the necessary degree of uniformity is maintained in the training of the close and long-range bomber units at the front, the replacement units, the units temporarily assigned to him for refresher training, and the units assigned to him for special duty.

To this end, he is responsible for the preparation of training material covering all aspects of bombardment activity (bombardment techniques, navigation, etc.), obtaining the concurrence of the other technical services generals whenever necessary. This material will be reviewed by the Luftwaffe

Operations Staff and approved by the Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff prior to publication. The General of the Bomber Forces is responsible for supervising the use of this material in the replacement units and units temporarily assigned to him for training. He is to be consulted in the selection and training of the required instructional personnel.

g. In accordance with instructions issued by the Luftwaffe Operations Staff and Branch VI or Branch IV, Quartermaster General, the General of the Bomber Forces directs the distribution of aircraft equipment and aviation fuels, as well as the assignment of personnel, to the replacement groups and the units temporarily assigned to him for refresher training.

h. The General of the Bomber Forces, in accordance with instructions issued by the Chief, Luftwaffe Personnel Office, may make recommendations for the filling of top-level posts within the close and long-range bomber units.

i. The General of the Bomber Forces is responsible for the compilation, evaluation, and application of military experience within his field of endeavor. Material pertaining to tactics will be routed to the Luftwaffe Operations Staff.

j. The General of the Bomber Forces is to be consulted in connection with the testing of new aircraft models and the training of their crews, whenever these items concern his own field of endeavor.

k. The General of the Bomber Forces is to be consulted in the selection of the airfields to be used by the training and replacement units under his command and by bomber units temporarily relieved of duty at the front to undergo refresher training.

l. The General of the Bomber Forces is not authorized to issue orders independently to troop or staff sections, with

the exception of those sections which are specifically operationally subordinate to him.

m. The following agencies are subordinate to the General of the Bomber Forces:

1) directly subordinate: the Chief of Air Torpedo Weapons; the Chief of Pilot Training, Baltic.

2) subordinate in respect to training and operations: 101st Bomber Group; 102d Bomber Group, assigned to the Chief of Air Torpedo Weapons; Unit Commanders' School, 101st Bomber Group; Luftwaffe Navigation School.

3) subordinate in respect to training only: the replacement units serving the forces under the command of the General of the Bomber Forces, unless otherwise determined by the Luftwaffe Operations Staff, Operations Branch; other units temporarily assigned by the Luftwaffe Operations Staff to the General of the Bomber Forces for refresher training.

C. The General of the Fighter Forces--formerly Luftwaffe Inspectorate 3--whose responsibilities were as follows:

a. The General of the Fighter Forces is personally subordinate to the Reichs Minister of Aviation and Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe. For technical and operational supervision, he is under the command of the Chief of the General Staff. He has the status and disciplinary authority of a division commander in accordance with the provisions of Luftwaffe Service Regulation No. 3/9.

b. In time of war, the General of the Fighter Forces is responsible for assuming the functions of a Luftwaffe inspector over all single-engine day fighter, twin-engine fighter, and night fighter units, as well as over the training schools in these fields.

c. 1) In connection with military operations planned by the Luftwaffe Operations Staff, the General of the Fighter Forces makes recommendations for the commitment of the available single-engine day fighter, twin-engine fighter, and night fighter units, taking into consideration their combat experience, training, personnel strength, and technological equipment.

In accordance with general instructions issued by the Luftwaffe Operations Staff, he is responsible for coordinating the methods to be used in directing day and night fighter operations with the General of the Signal Forces.

2) The General of the Fighter Forces is responsible for making periodic inspections of assigned units in order to satisfy himself as to their standard of training, combat preparedness, and utilization of weapons and equipment. He makes reports of his findings to the Chief of the General Staff, the Luftwaffe Operations Staff, the commanders in chief of the air fleets, the commanding generals of the air corps, and the appropriate sections of the Luftwaffe High Command and the Reichs Air Ministry. In conjunction with the above agencies, he is responsible for devising means to correct any defects he may have noted.

d. The General of the Fighter Forces is to be consulted in all matters pertaining to the activation, organization, equipment, and conversion of the single-engine day fighter, twin-engine fighter, and night fighter units, as well as in the planning of new areas of operations. He is expected to cooperate closely with the Quartermaster General, the Chief of Technical Air Armament, the General of the Signal Forces, the Chief Engineer, the Commanding General, Pilot Training, and the Commander, Testing Stations. He will also act as advisor to the above agencies in all questions concerning his field of endeavor.

e. In conjunction with the Luftwaffe Operations Staff,

Operations Branch, the General of the Fighter Forces is responsible for the establishment of technological requirements for the development of single-engine, twin-engine, and night fighter aircraft, including airborne equipment, weapons, and ammunition.

f. The General of the Fighter Forces is responsible for the development of the techniques to be used in the aiming and firing of airborne weapons, and for the preparation of appropriate operational and training directives.

g. In accordance with instructions issued by the Luftwaffe Operations Staff, the General of the Fighter Forces is responsible for establishing training requirements for the Commanding General, Pilot Training and makes periodic inspections to make certain that uniformity is maintained in the training of the single-engine fighter, twin-engine fighter, and night fighter units at the front, the replacement units serving these, and the units temporarily assigned to him for refresher training.

He directs the selection and training of instructional personnel.

h. In accordance with instructions issued by the Luftwaffe Operations Staff, Operations Branch and Branch VI or Branch IV, Quartermaster General, the General of the Fighter Forces directs the distribution of aircraft equipment and aviation fuels, as well as the assignment of personnel, to the replacement groups and the units temporarily assigned to him for refresher training.

i. In cooperation with the Quartermaster General, the General of the Fighter Forces is authorized to order adjustments in the distribution of equipment (day and night fighter aircraft, aircraft equipment, radar equipment, special technological equipment, etc.) to the various fighter operations areas. The Luftwaffe Operations Staff, Operations Branch,

is to be informed whenever such adjustment may be expected to have any effect on combat preparedness in the areas involved.

j. The General of the Fighter Forces, in accordance with instructions received from the Chief, Luftwaffe Personnel Office, may make recommendations for the filling of top-level posts within the single-engine day fighter, twin-engine fighter, and night fighter units and their headquarters staffs.

k. The General of the Fighter Forces is responsible for the compilation, evaluation, and application of military experience within his field of endeavor. Material pertaining to tactics will be routed to the Luftwaffe Operations Staff.

l. The General of the Fighter Forces is to be consulted in connection with the testing of new aircraft models and the training of their crews, insofar as these matters concern his own field of endeavor.

m. The General of the Fighter Forces is to be consulted in the selection of the airfields to be used by the training and replacement units under his command and by fighter units temporarily relieved of duty at the front to undergo refresher training.

n. The following agencies are subordinate to the General of the Fighter Forces:

1) subordinate in every respect: the Inspector for the Day Fighter Forces; the Inspector for the Night Fighter Forces.

2) subordinate in respect to training: all replacement units serving the single-engine day fighter, twin-engine fighter, and night fighter forces.

3) in respect to the development of aiming and firing

techniques (airborne weapons); the Luftwaffe Gunnery School at Vaerlose.

o. The General of the Fighter Forces is not authorized to issue independently operational orders to troop or staff sections, with the exception of those sections which are specifically operationally subordinate to him.

D. The General of the Antiaircraft Artillery Forces, Office of the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, whose responsibilities were as follows:

a. The General of the Antiaircraft Artillery Forces is the advisor of the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, and the Luftwaffe High Command in all matters pertaining to the use of antiaircraft artillery. He has the right of direct access to the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, but is required to inform the Chief of the General Staff in advance if he wishes to make use of this right.

He is personally directly responsible to the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe; however, he is expected to work closely with the Chief of the General Staff.

In case of emergency, he is authorized to issue orders in the name of the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, without clearing through the Chief of the General Staff in advance. He is not authorized to issue orders affecting the organization of forces.

b. The General of the Antiaircraft Artillery Forces may be given special assignments and special powers by the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe. These will be established by separate regulation.

c. In time of war the General of the Antiaircraft Artillery Forces is responsible for assuming the functions of a Luftwaffe inspector over all antiaircraft artillery units, including supply

depots, and over all other Luftwaffe units engaged in air defense, aircraft reporting, and aircraft identification duty with the troops.

d. Special duties:

1) In connection with military operations planned by the Luftwaffe Operations Staff, he makes recommendations for the commitment of the available antiaircraft artillery units, taking into consideration their combat experience, training, personnel strength, and technological equipment.

2) He is responsible for making periodic inspections of the antiaircraft artillery forces in order to satisfy himself as to their standard of training and utilization of weapons and equipment. He reports his findings to the appropriate agencies and, in conjunction with these, takes the action necessary to secure immediate amelioration of any defects he may have noted.

3) He is responsible for assuring the necessary degree of uniformity in training by preparing training directives and instructions for the Commanding General, Antiaircraft Artillery Training.

4) He is responsible for the establishment of requirements for the development and production of the weapons, instruments, ammunition, and equipment needed by the antiaircraft artillery forces.

He maintains close liaison with the Inspector for Training of Luftwaffe Rocket-Equipped Units in connection with the administration of all units thus equipped under his command.

5) He is responsible for directing a testing program at troop level, and for the introduction of new weapons, instruments, ammunition, and equipment at troop level.

6) He is to be consulted in all matters pertaining to

the activation, organization, and equipment of the antiaircraft artillery forces.

7) He is expected to cooperate closely with the Quartermaster General, the Chief of Technical Air Armament, the General of the Fighter Forces, and those headquarters responsible for guiding fighter aircraft operations. He also acts as advisor to the above agencies in all questions pertaining to the use of antiaircraft artillery.

8) In cooperation with the Luftwaffe Operations Staff, Intelligence Branch, he is responsible for the compilation, evaluation, and application of military experience in the field of antiaircraft artillery operations.

9) He is to be consulted in the filling of all posts within the antiaircraft artillery forces from regiment commander upwards.

E. Luftwaffe Inspectorate 5, Air Traffic Control and Equipment

Luftwaffe Inspectorate 5 was disbanded in 1943 and its missions taken over by the Inspector of Air Traffic and Air Safety under the command of the Chief of the General Staff.

F. The Chief of Motor Vehicle Transport, Luftwaffe

The office of the Chief of Motor Vehicle Transport, Luftwaffe, was established in 1943 from Luftwaffe Inspectorate 6 and the Motor Vehicle Supply Branch, and placed under the command of the Quartermaster General. Its responsibilities were as follows:

a. The Chief of Motor Vehicle Transport, Luftwaffe, is directly responsible to the Quartermaster General. He has the status and disciplinary authority of a division commander in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 18, Luftwaffe Service Regulation No. 3/9.

His permanent deputy is the Chief of Staff, office of

the Chief of Motor Vehicle Transport.

b. In time of war the Chief of Motor Vehicle Transport is responsible for assuming the functions of a Luftwaffe inspector over all motor vehicle transport activity within the Luftwaffe.

c. 1) The Chief of Motor Vehicle Transport is responsible for making periodic inspections in order to determine the standard of training, utilization, and combat preparedness of motor vehicle transport personnel and to assess the need for additional supplies of transport equipment.

He is further responsible for reporting any discrepancies to the appropriate agencies and for requesting whatever action may be necessary to correct them.

2) The Chief of Motor Vehicle Transport is responsible for directing the initial and advanced training of all motor vehicle transport personnel. Moreover, he is to be consulted in the selection and evaluation of such personnel, including personnel employed as supply column and transport service leaders.

d. In connection with military operations planned by the Luftwaffe Operations Staff, the Chief of Motor Vehicle Transport makes recommendations for the organization and utilization of the motor vehicle transport service, the motor vehicle maintenance service, and the motor vehicle supply depots. In conjunction with Branch IV, Quartermaster General, he directs the assignment of maintenance units and issues instructions for the employment of motor vehicle supply units.

e. The Chief of Motor Vehicle Transport is responsible for the following activities:

1) motor vehicle transport planning and allocation within the Luftwaffe and presentation of Luftwaffe requests for transport service to the Armed Forces High Command.

2) maintenance of records regarding the disposition of all available motor vehicles (those allocated from new production as well as those reconditioned by the maintenance service).

3) supervision of the supply and distribution of motor vehicle equipment.

4) compilation and evaluation of experience in the field of motor vehicle transport, review of inventions and improvements in this field, and issuance of technical manuals and instructional materials.

5) development of special equipment for motor vehicles and conversion of vehicles to generator gas (dry distillation).

6) enforcement of the laws and ordinances pertaining to motor vehicle traffic, the registration and licensing of Luftwaffe vehicles, and the assignment of the red chevron used to designate the vehicles of high-ranking commanders.

7) issuance of directives pertaining to the utilization of motor vehicle equipment, the control of motor vehicle traffic, and the processing of accident reports, losses and damages of motor vehicles.

f. The Chief of Motor Vehicle Transport is responsible for supervising the development of motor vehicle equipment. He directs the necessary testing and directs the introduction of new equipment.

He establishes requirements for the development of special equipment as well as modifications in existing equipment (in conjunction with the General of the Antiaircraft Artillery Forces, the General of the Signal Forces, the Chief of Air Defense, and the Chief of Technical Air Armament).

He orders the introduction of modifications and

supervises their accomplishment.

g. The Chief of Motor Vehicle Transport is responsible for the motor vehicle maintenance service of the Luftwaffe. He issues directives ordering the accomplishment of reorganizations, supply, and equipment desired by the General Staff. He supervises the coordination of motor vehicle maintenance activities between the Luftwaffe and the Armed Forces High Command and other branches of the Armed Forces.

h. He issues directives pertaining to the testing and evaluation of motor vehicle equipment, the procurement of such equipment, and the application of established criteria pertaining to motor vehicle performance.

i. He submits procurement requests for motor fuels, fuel storage facilities, and tires for vehicle-drawn antiaircraft artillery equipment and for aircraft servicing cars (the latter in cooperation with the Chief of Supply, Luftwaffe), and supervises the issue of these items together with Branch IV, Quartermaster General.

j. The Chief of Motor Vehicle Transport is responsible for administration of the funds allotted to motor vehicle operations.

k. The Chief of Motor Vehicle Transport is to work closely with the agencies indicated below in the following activities:

- 1) activation of new motor vehicle units and authorization of supplies and equipment (with Branches IX and VI, Quartermaster General).

- 2) establishment or alteration of motor vehicle equipment authorizations (with Luftwaffe Strength and Equipment Authorization Branch).

- 3) filling of motor vehicle personnel vacancies (with

Luftwaffe Personnel Office, Chief of Aviation, and Air Defense).

4) planning of construction work pertaining to motor vehicle operations (with Ground Organization Branch, Quartermaster General, and Chief of Luftwaffe Construction).

5) administration of clerical employees and workers engaged in motor vehicle operations--salaries and wages, clothing, insurance coverage, etc. --(with Chief of Aviation).

6) testing and introduction of special uniforms for motor vehicle personnel (with Chief of Aviation).

1. The following agencies are subordinate to the Chief of Motor Vehicle Transport:

1) directly subordinate: Luftwaffe Automotive School; liaison officers assigned to the office of the General of the Motor Vehicle Depot Forces East and West.

2) subordinate in respect to training: motor vehicle transport training units and schools maintained by the Luftwaffe; replacement battalions serving the motor vehicle maintenance units of the Luftwaffe.

m. The Chief of Motor Vehicle Transport is a member of the Motor Vehicle Commission appointed by the Reichs Minister of Weapons and Ammunition and serves as Luftwaffe representative on the central Motor Vehicle Committee.

G. Luftwaffe Inspectorate 7, Signal Communications

The Luftwaffe Inspectorate 7 was disbanded in accordance with the Luftwaffe Mobilization Plan of 1940. Its missions were taken over by the office of the General of the Signal Forces, (see above).

H. Luftwaffe Inspectorate 8, Naval Aircraft

Luftwaffe Inspectorate 8 was abolished in 1942 and its

missions taken over by the Luftwaffe General, Navy High Command. In 1944 the latter post, as well as the Luftwaffe Inspectorate 16, Air-Sea Rescue Service, was also abolished and the duties of both combined under the General for Naval Affairs, which office assumed responsibility for the administration of all Luftwaffe naval aircraft engaging in air-sea rescue and salvage operations, as well as for the training of personnel employed in these activities.

I. Luftwaffe Inspectorate 9, Pilot Training Schools

Until 1944 Luftwaffe Inspectorate 9 was under the command of the Chief of Training. It was disbanded in 1944 after the position of General for Pilot Training and the 1st through 4th Pilot Training Divisions had been established.

J. Luftwaffe Inspectorate 10, Troop Service and Training

In 1944 Luftwaffe Inspectorate 10 was redesignated as the Office of the General for Military Training and placed under the command of the Chief of the General Staff. In 1945 it was disbanded and its duties assumed by Branch III, General Staff and the technical services generals.

K. Luftwaffe Inspectorate 11, Parachute and Airlanding forces

Luftwaffe Inspectorate 11 was disbanded in 1940; its duties were assumed at first by the 7th Air Division, or rather by the Headquarters, XI Air Corps, and later by the Commander in Chief, Parachute Forces.

L. Luftwaffe Inspectorate 12, Navigation

Luftwaffe Inspectorate 12 was disbanded in 1942 and its duties assigned to the General of the Bomber Forces. In 1944 the post General for Navigation was created; during that same year, however, the post was abolished and the duties divided among the technical services generals.

M. Luftwaffe Inspectorate 13, Air Defense

During the period from 1940 until 1945, Luftwaffe Inspectorate 13 remained under the command of the Chief of Air Defense (later Chief of Aviation), since its work--carried out under the direction of the Air Defense Planning Staff--was essentially in the administrative field (issuance of directives and liaison with other ministries). In 1945, when the position Chief of Air Defense was created, this Inspectorate was disbanded.

N. Luftwaffe Inspectorate 14, Medical Service.

In 1944 this Inspectorate was redesignated the Office of the Chief, Luftwaffe Medical Service and assigned to the Quartermaster General.

O. Luftwaffe Inspectorate 15, Air Defense Zones

After the establishment of the Western Air Defense Zone, this Inspectorate was deactivated. Its missions were assigned to the General of the Antiaircraft Artillery Forces, Fortifications Branch.

P. Luftwaffe Inspectorate 16, Air-Sea Rescue Service

Originally set up in 1940, this Inspectorate was combined with the office of the General for Naval Affairs in 1944.

Q. Luftwaffe Inspectorate 17, Construction Troops and Prisoners of War

Luftwaffe Inspectorate 17 was established in 1942. In 1944, when the Luftwaffe construction units were taken over by Organization Todt, it was redesignated as the Inspector for Luftwaffe Engineer Construction Units, Home Guard Units, and Transport Escort Platoons. The administration of prisoners of war was assumed by the General for Foreign Personnel and the Inspectorate for Eastern Personnel.

R. Luftwaffe Inspectorate 18, Luftwaffe Field Units

Luftwaffe Inspectorate 18 was established during the winter of 1942 at the time the Luftwaffe field divisions were activated. In 1944, after these divisions had been absorbed by the Army, the Inspectorate's mission was finished and it was disbanded.

Appendix 2

LIST OF EQUIVALENT LUFTWAFFE
AND USAF GENERAL OFFICER RANKS

Reichsmarschall des Grossdeutschen Reiches (Goering's rank: Reichs Marshall of the Pan-German Reich)	No equivalent
Generalfeldmarschall	General of the Air Force (Army)
Generaloberst	General
General der Flieger (der Flak, etc.)	Lieutenant General
Generalleutnant	Major General
Generalmajor	Brigadier General

Appendix 3

LIST OF GAF MONOGRAPH PROJECT STUDIES

<u>Study No.</u>	<u>Title</u>
150	The German Air Force in the Spanish War
151	The German Air Force in Poland
152	The German Air Force in France and the Low Countries (including Airlanding Operations in Belgium and the Netherlands)
153-155	The German Air Force versus Russia on the Eastern Front
156	The Battle of Britain
157	Operation Sea Lion
158-160	The German Air Force versus the Allies in the West
161	The German Air Force versus the Allies in the Mediterranean
162	The Battle of Crete
163 & 165	German Air Force Close Support and Air Interdiction Operations
164	German Air Force Air Defense Operations
166	German Air Force Counter Air Operations
167	German Air Force Airlift Operations
168	German Air Force Air-Sea Rescue Operations

<u>Study No.</u>	<u>Title</u>
169	Training in the German Air Force
170	Procurement in the German Air Force
171	Intelligence in the German Air Force
172	German Air Force Medicine
173	The German Air Force General Staff
174	Command and Leadership in the German Air Force (Goering, Milch, Jeschonnek, Udet, Wever)
175	The Russian Air Force in the Eyes of German Commanders
176	Russian Patterns of Reaction to the German Air Force
177	Russian Use of Airlift to Supply Partisan Forces
178	Problems of Fighting a Three-Front Air War
179	Problems of Waging a Day and Night Defensive Air War
180	The Problem of the Long-Range Night Intruder Bomber
181	The Problem of Air Superiority in the Battle with Allied Strategic Air Forces
182	Fighter-Bomber Operations in Situations of Air Inferiority
183	Analysis of Specialized Anglo-American Techniques
184	Effects of Allied Air Attacks on German Divisional and Army Organizations on the Battle Fronts

<u>Study No.</u>	<u>Title</u>
185	Effects of Allied Air Attacks on German Air Force Bases and Installations
186	The German Air Force System of Target Analysis
187	The German Air Force System of Weapons Selection
188	German Civil Air Defense
189	Historical Turning Points in the German Air Force War Effort
190	The Organization of the German Air Force High Command and Higher Echelon Headquarters within the German Air Force

GLOSSARY

Adjutant's Group	Gruppe Adjutantur
Adjutant's Office (1848)	Adjutantur
Administrative Subordination	Truppendienstliche Unterstellung
Admiral Staff	Admiralstab
Advance Airfield Command	E-Hafenkommando
Aerial Photography Branch	Abteilung Luftwaffenbildwesen
Aerial Photography School	Fliegerbildschule
Air Administration Office, Air Command Office	Verwaltungsamt, Luftkommandoamt
Air Administrative Area	Luftkreis
Air Administrative Area Command	Luftkreiskommando
Air Administrative Command	Luftgaukommando
Air Attache	Luftattache
Air Command Office	Luftkommandoamt
Air Corps	Fliegerkorps
Air Defense Branch, Air Command Office	Luftschutzabteilung, Luftkommandoamt
Air Defense Group	Luftschutzgruppe
Air Defense Office	Luftschutzamt
Air Defense Planning Staff	Arbeitsstab Luftschutz
Air Division	Fliegerdivision
Air Fleet	Luftflotte
Air Fleet Headquarters	Luftflottenkommando
Air Fleet Reich	Luftflotte Reich
Air Force Branch (Armed Forces Armaments Office)	Wehrmachtluftabteilung
Air Force Operation Branch, Air Command Office	Fliegerfuehrungsabteilung, Luftkommandoamt
Air Force Organization Branch, Air Command Office	Fliegerorganisationsabteilung, Luftkommandoamt
Air Force Training Branch, Air Command Office	Fliegerausbildungsabteilung, Luftkommandoamt
Air Liaison Officer	Fliegerverbindungsoffizier
Air Ministry	Luftfahrtsministerium

Air Ordnance Group	Luftzeuggruppe
Air Ordnance Office	Luftzeugamt
Air Technical Academy	Lufttechnische Akademie
Air Technical Office, Air	Lufttechnisches Amt,
Command Office	Luftkommandoamt
Air Torpedo and Long-Range	Lufttorpedo- und Fernkampfgeschwader
Bomber Wings	
Air War Academy	Luftkriegsakademie
Airfield Area	Flughafenbereich
Airfield Commandant	Fliegerhorstkommandant
Antiaircraft Artillery Group	Gruppe Flak
Antiaircraft Artillery Liaison	Flakverbindungs-offizier
Officer	
Area Administrative Commander	Gauleiter
Armed Forces	Wehrmacht
Armed Forces Armaments Office	Wehrmachtruestungsamt
Armed Forces High Command	Oberkommando der Wehrmacht
	(O. K. W.)
Armed Forces High Command,	Oberkommando der Wehrmacht,
North	Nord
Armed Forces High Command,	Oberkommando der Wehrmacht,
South	Sued
Armed Forces Office	Wehrmachtamt
Armed Forces Operations Staff	Wehrmachtsfuehrungsstab
Armed Forces Supply Office	Wehrmachtnachschubamt
Armed Forces War Academy	Wehrmachtakademie
Army Directorate	Heeresleitung
Army General Staff (1814)	Generalstab der Armee
Army General Staff	Generalstab des Heeres
Army Great General Staff	Grosser Generalstab der Armee
Army High Command	Oberkommando des Heeres (O. K. H.)
Army Ordnance Office	Waffenamt des Heeres
Army War Academy	Heereskriegsakademie
Assistant Chief of Staff	Fuehrergehilfe (cover name from
(general's assistant)	period of Reichswehr)
Aviation Office	Luftamt (LB)
Battle Order	Kriegsgliederung

Branch	Abteilung
Branch Chief	Abteilungschef
Branch I, General Staff (Operations)	1. Abteilung des Generalstabs
Branch II, General Staff (Organization)	2. Abteilung des Generalstabs
Branch III, General Staff (Training)	3. Abteilung des Generalstabs
Branch V, General Staff (Intelligence)	5. Abteilung des Generalstabs
Branch VII, General Staff (Mapping & Aerial Photography)	7. (Karten- und Luftbild) Abteilung des Generalstabs
Branch VIII, General Staff (Military History)	8. (Kriegswissenschaftliche) Abteilung des Generalstabs
 Cabinet Warfare	 Kabinettkriege
Cadet corps	Kadettenkorps
Central Branch, Reichs Air Ministry	Zentralabteilung (ZA), Reichsluftfahrtministerium
Central Department	Zentralamtsgruppe
Chief Administrative Officer, Luftwaffe	Chefintendant der Luftwaffe
Chief, Air Weather Service	Chef Wetterdienst
Chief Engineer, Luftwaffe	Chefingenieur der Luftwaffe
Chief Judge Advocate, Luftwaffe	Chefrichter der Luftwaffe
Chief Judge Advocate, Luftwaffe	Chef der Luftwaffenrechtspflege
Chief, Luftwaffe Medical Service	Chef des Sanitaetswesens
Chief, Luftwaffe Personnel Office	Chef des Luftwaffenpersonalamtes
Chief of Air Defense	Chef der Luftwehr
Chief of Air Defense	Chef des Luftschutzes
Chief of Air Liaison Service	Chef des Verbindungsflugwesens
Chief of Air Operations	Chef der Luftkriegsfuehrung
Chief of Air Torpedo Weapons	Bevollmaechtigte fuer die Lufttorpedowaffe
Chief of Air Traffic Control	Chef der Flugsicherheit
Chief of Air Transport for the Armed Forces	Lufttransportchef der Wehrmacht

Chief of Aviation	Chef der Luftfahrt
Chief of High Frequency Communication	Chef Hochfrequenz
Chief of Luftwaffe Procurement and Supply	Generalluftzeugmeister
Chief of Motor Vehicle Transport, Luftwaffe	Chef des Kraftfahrwesens der Luftwaffe
Chief of Personnel Utilization and Supply Planning	Chef der personellen Ruestung und Nachschubsfuehrung
Chief of Pilot Training, Baltic	Ausbildungsfliegerfuehrer Ostsee
Chief of Procurement and Supply, Luftwaffe	Luftzeugmeister
Chief of Signal Communications	Chef des Nachrichtenverbindungswesens
Chief of Staff, Naval Warfare	Chef des Stabes der Seekriegsleitung
Chief of Supply	Chef des Nachschubwesens
Chief of Technical Air Armament	Chef der technischen Luftruestung
Chief of the Army Directorate	Chef der Heeresleitung
Chief of Training	Chef der Ausbildung
Chief of Training	Chef des Ausbildungswesen
Chief, Technical Office	Chef des technischen Amtes
Civil Aviation Offices	Zivile Luftaemter
Commander	Befehlshaber
Commander in Chief	Oberbefehlshaber
Commander in Chief, Army	Oberbefehlshaber des Heeres
Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe	Oberbefehlshaber der Luftwaffe
Commander, Naval Air Forces (East and West)	Fuehrer der Seeluftstreitkraefte (Ost und West)
Commander, Replacement Luftwaffe	Befehlshaber der Ersatzluftwaffe
Commander, Testing Stations	Kommandeur der Erprobungsstellen
Commanders of the Reconnaissance Personnel Replacement Groups with Subordinate Units	Kommodore der Ergaenzungsauf- klaerungsgruppen mit Ergaenzungseinheiten
Commanding General, Luftwaffe Signal Communications Training	Kommandierender General der Luftwaffennachrichtenausbildung
Commanding General, Pilot Training	Kommandierender General der Fliegerausbildung

Communications Service

Nachrichtenverbindungsdienst

Defense Office

Wehramt

Department

Amtsgruppe

Department Chief

Amtsgruppenchef

Department Chief

Ressortchef

Direct Subordination

Immediatstellung

Duty and Position Roster

Dienst- und Stellenplan

Economics Office

Wirtschaftsamt

Engineer Corps

Ingenieurkorps

Field Forces

Feldheer

Foreign Air Forces, Air
Command Office

Fremde Luftwaffen, Luftkommandoamt

Fortifications Branch

Abteilung Befestigung

Fuehrer Headquarters

Fuehrerhauptquartier

General Air Office

Allgemeines Luftamt (LB)

General Army Office

Allgemeines Heeresamt

General Commissioner in
Charge of all Rocket

Generalbevollmaechtigter des

Weapons, directly
responsible to the Fuehrer

Fuehrers fuer alle Raketenwaffen

General Commissioner in Charge
of Jet Aircraft, directly
responsible to the Reichs-
marschallGeneralbevollmaechtigter des
Reichsmarschalls fuer
StrahlflugzeugeGeneral for Air Traffic
Control and the Ground
OrganizationGeneral des Flugbetriebs und der
Fliegerbodenorganisation

General for Foreign Personnel

General fuer auslaendisches
Personal

General for Naval Affairs

General des Seewesens

General for Personnel Utiliza- tion	General fuer den Personaleinsatz
General for Troop Technical Services	General fuer Truppentechnik
General of Pilot Training	General der Fliegerausbildung
General of the Air Transport Forces	General der Transportflieger
General of the Antiaircraft Artillery Forces, Office of the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe	General der Flakwaffe des Ob. d. L. (Oberbefehlshaber der Luftwaffe)
General of the Bomber Forces	General der Kampfflieger
General of the Close-Support Forces	General der Schlachtflieger
General of the Fighter Forces	General der Jagdflieger
General of the Luftwaffe Construction Forces, Office of the Chief of Luftwaffe Construction	General der Luftwaffenbautruppen beim Chef des Luftwaffenbauwesens
General of the Motor Vehicle Depot Forces, East and West	General der Kraftfahrparktruppen Ost and West
General of the Reconnaissance Forces	General der Aufklaerungsflieger
General of the Signal Forces	Generalmachrichtenfuhrer
General Staff	Generalstab
General Staff of the Field Forces	General Stab des Feldheeres
General's Hill	Feldherrnhuegel
German Air Force	Luftwaffe
Great General Staff	Grosser Generalstab
Group	Gruppe
Group Leader	Gruppenleiter
Group I (Tactics)	Gruppe I (Taktik)
Group II (Organization)	Gruppe II (Organisation)
Group III (Training)	Gruppe III (Ausbildung)
Headquarters	Hauptquartier, Generalkommando
Headquarters Commandant	Kommandant des Hauptquartiers

Headquarters, Testing Stations
High Command
Home Defense Branch

Kommando der Erprobungsstellen
Oberkommando
Abteilung Landesverteidigung

Inspector for Aerial Mines
Inspector for Air Safety Control
Inspector for Antiaircraft
Artillery and Air Defense
Inspector for Luftwaffe Engineer
Construction Units, Home
Guard Units, and Transport
Escort Platoons
Inspector for Radio Communica-
tions
Inspector for Radio
Reconnaissance
Inspector for the Aircraft
Reporting Service
Inspector for the Day Fighter
Forces
Inspector for the Flying Forces
Inspector for the Night Fighter
Forces
Inspector General
Inspector, Navy
Inspector of the Air Transport
Forces
Inspector of the Ground Organi-
zation and Air Traffic Control
Inspectorate for Aircraft Equip-
ment, Air Defense Office
Inspectorate for Air Safety
and Equipment
Inspectorate for Eastern
Personnel
Inspectorate for the Air-Sea
Rescue Service

Luftmineninspizient
Flugsicherungsinspizient
Inspekteur der Flakartillerie und
des Luftschutzes
Inspekteur der Luftwaffenpioniere,
Landesschuetzen und
Transportbegleitkommandos
Funkinspizient
Funkaufklaerungsinspizient
Flugmeldeinspizient
Inspekteur der Tagjaeger
Inspizient der Fliegertruppen
Inspekteur der Nachtjaeger
Generalinspekteur
Inspizient See
Inspekteur der Transportflieger
Inspecteur der Fliegerboden-
organisation und des Flugbetriebs
Fliegergeraeteinspektion,
Luftschutzamt
Inspektion Flugsicherheit und
Geraet
Inspektion fuer ostvoelkisches
Personal
Inspektion fuer den Seenotdienst

Inspector for Training of
Luftwaffe Rocket-Equipped
Units

Inspectorate General, Luftwaffe
Inspectorate of Air Technical
Troop Services
Inspectorate of Schools
Instrument Navigation Schools

Judge Advocate, Luftwaffe

Luftwaffe Administration Office,
Air Command Office
Luftwaffe Advanced School
Luftwaffe Automotive School

Luftwaffe Command, Austria
Luftwaffe Commander (at an
army headquarters)
Luftwaffe Commanding General

Luftwaffe Defense Office
Luftwaffe General, Fuehrer
Headquarters
Luftwaffe General Staff
Luftwaffe General Staff
Luftwaffe General with
Commander in Chief, Army

Luftwaffe General with
Commander in Chief, Navy
Luftwaffe Group
Luftwaffe Group Command
Luftwaffe Ground Organization
Branch

Inspekteur ueber alle mit
Kampfmitteln durch Raketenantrieb
ausgestatteten Einheiten der
Luftwaffe bis zur Frontreife
Generalinspektion der Luftwaffe
Inspektion des fliegertechnischen
Truppendienstes
Inspektion der Schulen
Blindflugschulen

Luftwaffenrechtspflege

Luftwaffenverwaltungsamt,
Luftkommandoamt
Hoehere Luftwaffenschule
Kraftfahrtechnische Schule der
Luftwaffe
Luftwaffenkommando Oesterreich
Koluft (Kommandeur der Luftwaffe)

Kommandierender General der
Luftwaffe
Luftwaffenwehramt
General der Luftwaffe im
Fuehrerhauptquartier
Generalstab der Luftwaffe
Luftwaffengeneralstab
General der Luftwaffe beim
Oberbefehlshaber des Heeres
(later Oberkommando des Heeres)
Luftwaffengeneral beim Ob. d. M.
(Oberbefehlshaber der Marine)
Gruppe Luftwaffe
Luftwaffengruppenkommando
Abteilung Luftwaffenbodenorganisation

Luftwaffe Gunnery School
 Luftwaffe High Command
 Luftwaffe Inspectorate
 Luftwaffe Inspectorate 5 (Air
 Safety and Equipment)
 Luftwaffe Inspectorate 6 (Motor
 Vehicles)
 Luftwaffe Inspectorate 7 (Signal
 Communications)
 Luftwaffe Inspectorate 8 (Naval
 Aircraft)
 Luftwaffe Inspectorate 9 (Pilot
 Training Schools)
 Luftwaffe Inspectorate 10
 (Troop Service and Training)
 Luftwaffe Inspectorate 11 (Para-
 chute and Airlanding Forces)
 Luftwaffe Inspectorate 12
 (Navigation)
 Luftwaffe Inspectorate 13 (Air
 Defense)
 Luftwaffe Inspectorate 14
 (Medical Services)
 Luftwaffe Inspectorate 15 (Air
 Defense Zones)
 Luftwaffe Inspectorate 16 (Air-
 Sea Rescue Service)
 Luftwaffe Inspectorate 17
 (Construction Troops and
 Prisoners of War)
 Luftwaffe Inspectorate 18
 (Luftwaffe Field Units)
 Luftwaffe Liaison Staff, North
 Luftwaffe Mobilization Plan
 Luftwaffe Navigation School
 Luftwaffe Operations Staff
 Luftwaffe Organization Staff
 Luftwaffe Personnel Office, Air
 Command Office

Schiessschule der Luftwaffe
 Oberkommando der Luftwaffe (O. K. L.)
 Luftwaffeninspektion
 Luftwaffeninspektion 5
 (Flugsicherheit und Geraet)
 Luftwaffeninspektion 6
 (Kraftfahrwesen)
 Luftwaffeninspektion 7
 (Nachrichtenverbindungswesen)
 Luftwaffeninspektion 8 (Seeflieger)

 Luftwaffeninspektion 9
 (Flugzeugfuehrerschulen)
 Luftwaffeninspektion 10
 (Truppendienst und Erziehung)
 Luftwaffeninspektion 11 (Fallschirm-
 und Luftlandetruppen)
 Luftwaffe Inspektion 12 (Navigation)
 Luftwaffeninspektion 13 (Luftschutz)

 Luftwaffeninspektion 14
 (Sanitaetswesen)
 Luftwaffeninspektion 15
 (Luftverteidigungszonen)
 Luftwaffeninspektion 16
 (Seenotdienst)
 Luftwaffeninspektion 17 (Bautruppen
 und Kriegsgefangene)

 Luftwaffeninspektion 18 (Luftwaffen-
 feldeinheiten)
 Luftwaffenverbindungsstab Nord
 Mobilisationsplan der Luftwaffe
 Navigationsschule der Luftwaffe
 Luftwaffenfuehrungsstab
 Luftwaffenorganisationsstab
 Luftwaffenpersonalamt,
 Luftkommandoamt

Luftwaffe Service Regulation	Luftwaffendienstvorschrift
Luftwaffe Signal Communications Replacement Division	Luftnachrichtenersatzdivision
Luftwaffe Signal Communications Training Division	Luftnachrichtenausbildungsdivision
Luftwaffe Supply Office	Luftwaffennachschubamt
Luftwaffe Testing Station	Erprobungsstelle der Luftwaffe
Mapping and Aerial Photography Branch	Karten- und Luftbildabteilung
Mapping Group	Gruppe Kartenwesen
Medical Officer, Air Adminis- trative Command	Luftgauarzt
Medical Services	Sanitaetseinrichtung
Medical Services Branch, Air Administrative Command	Luftgausanitaetsabteilung
Military Area	Wehrkreis
Military History Branch, General Staff	Kriegsgeschichtliche Abteilung des Generalstabs
Minister of Armament	Ruestungsminister
Minister of Aviation	Luftfahrtminister
Ministerial Office	Ministeramt
Miscellaneous Branch, Air Command Office	Allgemeine Abteilung, Luftkommandoamt
Miscellaneous Office, Reichs Air Ministry	Allgemeines Amt, Reichsluftfahrt- ministerium
Motor Vehicle Branch	Abteilung Kraftfahrwesen
Motor Vehicle Commission	Kraftfahrzeugkommission
Motor Vehicle Committee	Kraftfahrzeugausschuss
Motor Vehicle Group	Gruppe Kraftfahrwesen
Motor Vehicle Supply Branch	Nachschubabteilung fuer Kraftfahrzeuge
National Army (Austrian)	Bundesheer
National Socialist Guidance Officer	Nationalsozialistischer Fuehrungs- offizier

National Weather Service
Navy Group Command
Navy High Command

Reichswetterdienst
Marinegruppenkommando
Oberkommando der Kriegsmarine
(O. K. M.)

Office
Office Chief
Office of the General for
Military Training
Operational Planning
Branch (1814)
Operational or tactical
subordination
Operations Branch, Air
Command Office
Operations Staff
Operations Staff, Weather
Observation
Ordnance Inspectorate
Ordnance Office
Organization Branch, Air
Command Office

Amt
Amtschef
General fuer militaerische
Ausbildung
Plankammer*

Einsatzmaessige Unterstellung

Fuehrungsabteilung, Luftkommandoamt

Fuehrungsstab
Wetterwarterfuehrungsstab

Waffeninspektion
Waffenamt
Organisationsabteilung,
Luftkommandoamt

Personnel Branch, Air
Command Office
Personnel Office
Policy Section, Air Command
Office
President of the Reich

Personalabteilung, Luftkommandoamt

Personalamt
Chefgruppe, Luftkommandoamt

Reichspraesident

Quartermaster
Quartermaster, Air Command
Office

Quartiermeister
Oberquartiermeister,
Luftkommandoamt

* Editor's Note: More recently, Plankammer has been used to mean
"Map Office."

Quartermaster General
 Quartermaster General, Army
 Quartermaster General's Staff
 Quartermaster Service

Generalquartiermeister
 Generalquartiermeister des Heeres
 Generalquartiermeisterstab
 Quartiermeisterdienst

Reichs Air Ministry
 Reichs Chancellor
 Reichs Commander of the SS
 and Minister of the Interior
 Reichs Commissioner of
 Aviation
 Reichs Marshal of the Pan-
 German Reich and Commander
 in Chief, Luftwaffe
 Reichs Minister of Armament
 and War Production
 Reichs Minister of Aviation
 Reichs Minister of Defense
 Reichs Minister of War
 Reichs Minister of Weapons
 and Ammunition
 Reichs Ministry of Aviation
 Reichs Ministry of Defense
 Reichs Ministry of Defense
 Right of direct access to
 superior (1883)

Reichsluftfahrtministerium
 Reichskanzler
 Reichsfuehrer SS und Reichsminister
 des Innern
 Reichskommissar fuer die Luftfahrt

Reichsmarschall des Grossdeutschen
 Reiches und Oberbefehlshaber der
 Luftwaffe
 Reichsminister fuer Ruestung und
 Kriegsproduktion
 Reichsminister der Luftfahrt
 Reichswehrminister
 Reichskriegsminister
 Reichsminister fuer Bewaffnung
 und Munition
 Reichsministerium der Luftfahrt
 Reichsverteidigungsministerium
 Reichswehrministerium
 Immediatvortrag

Senior Commander
 Senior Commander, Troop
 Gas Defense
 Senior Flying Officer
 Senior Signal Officer
 Senior Signal Officer, Office
 of the CinC, Luftwaffe
 Signal and Aircraft Reporting
 Service, Air Administrative
 Command

Hoeherer Befehlshaber
 Hoeherer Kommandeur fuer
 Truppengasschutz
 Hoeherer Fliegerkommandeur
 Hoeherer Nachrichtenfuehrer
 Hoeherer Nachrichtenfuehrer
 des Ob. d. L.
 Luftnachrichten- und Flugmeldewesen
 im Luftgau

Signal Branch, Air Administrative Command	Luftgaunachrichtenabteilung
Special Commissioner	Sonderbevollmaechtigter
Special Commissioner for Torpedo Weapons	Bevollmaechtigter fuer Torpedowaffen
Special Commissioner in Charge of Defense against Enemy Long-Range Weapons	Sonderbeauftragter fuer Abwehr feindlicher Fernkampfmittel
Special Commissioner in Charge of Defense against 4-Engine Bomber Units	Sonderbeauftragter fuer Abwehr 4-Motoriger Kampfverbaende
Special Duty General Officer	General z. b. V (zur besonderen Verwendung)
Special Military History Official Appointed by the Fuehrer	Sonderbeauftragter des Fuehrers fuer die Kriegsgeschichte
Special Missions and Troop Recommendations Staff	Stab fuer Sonderauftraege und Truppenvorschlaege
Specialist Service	Truppensonderdienst
State Secretary and Inspector General, Luftwaffe	Staatssekretaer und Generalinspekteur der Luftwaffe
State Secretary of Aviation	Staatssekretaer der Luftfahrt
Strength and Equipment Authorization Branch	Abteilung Staerke und Ausruestungsnachweis
Substaff	Referat
Supply Group	Gruppe Nachschub
Supply Office, Air Command Office	Nachschubamt, Luftkommandoamt
Supply Planning Operations Staff	Nachschubfuehrungsstab
Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces	Oberster Befehlshaber der Wehrmacht
Technical Aide	Referent
Technical General Staff	Technischer Generalstab
Technical Office (Reichs Air Ministry)	Technisches Amt (LC)
Technical Service General	Waffengeneral

Top-Level Organization
 Topographical Branch
 Training Branch
 Training Staff
 Training Wing
 Troop General Staff
 Troop Office
 24th Training and Testing
 Headquarters

Spitzengliederung
 Abteilung Aufnahmen
 Ausbildungsabteilung
 Ausbildungsstab
 Lehrgeschwader
 Truppengeneralstab
 Truppenamt
 Lehr- und Erprobungskommando 24

Unit Commander

Verbandsfuehrer

War Academy
 Wartime Top-Level Organi-
 zation
 Western Air Defense Zone

Kriegsakademie
 Kriegsspitzen-gliederung
 Verteidigungszone West

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